

Mulki meets counterpart in U.S.

WASHINGTON (Petra) — Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki Wednesday met with U.S. Secretary of Commerce William Daley and discussed bilateral trade and economic relations. Dr. Mulki briefed Mr. Daley on the Jordanian measures taken recently to start the Jordanian-European partnership agreement and to meet World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership requirements. In addition, they discussed His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the United States at the beginning of May.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Jordan accepts nomination of new Israeli envoy

AMMAN (AP) — Jordan has accepted the nomination of a new Israeli ambassador, the second to the Kingdom since diplomatic ties were established in 1994. A Royal Decree carried by Jordanian newspapers Wednesday said His Majesty King Hussein endorsed Oded Eran's nomination for a three-year term. The Israeli embassy said Mr. Eran will arrive in Jordan on Monday to take up his duties. Mr. Eran, 56, a former deputy director-general for economic affairs at Israel's foreign ministry, succeeds Shimon Shamir, 62, who ended his two-year term here in February. Jordan and Israel established diplomatic ties in November 1994, one month after signing a landmark peace treaty that ended nearly five decades of belligerence between the Mideast neighbours.

Volume 22 Number 6517

AMMAN THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MAY 1-2, 1997, DUH'L HIJJA 24-25, 1417

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

King, Netanyahu optimistic on peace on a CNN live broadcast

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Wednesday described the current pace of the peace process as slow and called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to engage with the Palestinians in discreet talks that would address all aspects of the peace process.

"I believe that we are moving extremely slowly and possibly are at a lull at this point in time in regard to the progress we had hoped would transform the region," the King said.

Addressing Mr. Netanyahu by his nickname "Bibi," the King said: "I think maybe we can do something, all of us, to see if we can move away from the public scene."

The Israeli premier responded: "Your Majesty, my friend, I think you are right. It would be wonderful if we could find the opportunity to really discuss things directly."

His Majesty said in a live televised interview with Israel's prime minister which was broadcast on

Cable News Network (CNN) Wednesday evening "I would hope that the Prime Minister of Israel would be able to reassure us that he might be also able to address many points regarding the implementation of what has been agreed upon so far and hopefully some action with courage and vision to help our Palestinian brethren in terms of their airport in Gaza Strip and seaport in Gaza, in terms of links between the West Bank and Gaza... all of these will be of great help in laying once again the solid foundation of trust and mutual respect for the times ahead and negotiations that must be resumed."

In an apparent reference to hardliners in Mr. Netanyahu's camp, the King said that "a minority of extremists here (in the Arab World) and there (in Israel) have dictated their agenda upon us."

The King urged the Israeli premier to take action and display wisdom, courage and humility. "It is time not to demean each other, but for each of us in this position to place himself in the place of his opposite num-

ber and think of the problems and challenges he faces and seek to alleviate them and to ease them. This is the spirit. I am sure that much can be done and much can be achieved and must be achieved," the King said. "This is a time for action, this is a time for wisdom, a time for humility. It is time not to demean each other," the King said.

His Majesty urged Mr. Netanyahu to fulfill commitments Israel made to the Palestinians in order to remove the deadlock in the peace talks, which was caused by the Israeli premier's decision to build a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

On his turn, Mr. Netanyahu said that his government will go ahead in the construction of a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem but added that his government will also build housing units for Arab residents.

"Within the next two weeks we will begin construction of Arab housing alongside the construction we have already done. We are absolutely committed for that equal treatment," he

said.

Mr. Netanyahu said that his government has started several steps to ease tension with the Palestinians by letting 56,000 Palestinian workers enter Israel, lifting the closure imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip and by making it easier for East Jerusalem Arab residents to regain residency rights (which Israeli authorities have been revoking).

In reply to a question on Israeli settlement building and expansion, King Hussein said: "I would like to say very, very clearly that any change in the status quo, any change on the ground beyond what has happened already only helps create greater difficulties... if we are negotiating the final settlement or about to begin to do so, then why add to the already complex situation new elements that will only create greater mistrust and then antagonism and cause reactions that all of us wish to avoid... this is my view and I am very happy to hear the prime minister say that

said.

(Continued on page 2)

Crown Prince honours labour representatives on worker's day

By Ghaila Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Wednesday stressed the need for building on Jordan's comparative advantage in its ability to manage its human resources in an effective and transparent manner.

The Crown Prince emphasised that comprehensive planning by the government and the private sector is essential to increase productivity and enhance the living standards of Jordanians.

In an address during a luncheon held in honour of leaders and members of labour associations and unions, the Crown Prince pointed to the interconnectedness of the forces of production and the need for more coordination among all sectors of society.

"There is a common national interest in working as one team to increase productivity," said Prince Hassan, pointing to the inherent complementarity between higher education, and the labour force.

"Increasing productivity



is a multi-dimensional issue that requires training, incentives, effective management of resources and natural guidance," said Prince Hassan.

He said the ceremony to honour leaders and representatives of the labour sector on the occasion of Labour Day was held at the University of Jordan to emphasise the interconnectedness between higher edu-

cation and the labour market.

Prince Hassan said that effective management of human resources and natural resources is a sure way to better productivity.

Prince Hassan said during the luncheon which was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani and Minister of

Labour Saleh Khasawneh, that comprehensive sectoral planning is essential for the development process in the country.

"I work side by side with every citizen of this country in the government and the private sector in activating comprehensive sectoral planning," Prince Hassan said during the ceremony

(Continued on page 2)

Yemen's ruling party proclaims victory amidst charges of fraud

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen's ruling party declared a crushing victory Wednesday in parliamentary elections, which international observers said were relatively free and fair despite a rash of killings and charges of fraud.

President Ali Abdullah Saleh's ruling General People's Congress (GPC) said it had won 161 of the 233 districts already counted for the 301-member parliament in Sunday's election.

The election commission, however, was due to complete the official tally later Wednesday. Its last tally, released Tuesday, gave the GPC 115 of the 167 seats counted.

The GPC's main rival but also partner in the outgoing governing coalition, the Islamist Islah Party (IP), threatened Wednesday not to fill its seats in the new parliament, accusing Mr. Saleh's party of fraud and vote-rigging.

According to IIP's count, it had won 44 seats of the 226 districts so far counted, with the GPC winning 141 and the rest going to independents.

International observers, including representatives from Europe, Russia and the United States, said Wednesday that Yemen's first elections since a 1994

north-south civil war were relatively free and fair.

"The Joint International Observer Group in Yemen (JIOGY) notes that the 1997 parliamentary elections have taken place at an early stage of the country's democratic development and in complex circumstances," said Fre Le Poole, a senator from the Netherlands and spokeswoman for the group.

"Taking into account those circumstances and despite the aforementioned irregularities, the JIOGY mission is of the opinion that the 1997 elections can be judged as free and fair," she said.

However, she pointed out some irregularities, saying voting privacy had been compromised in more than one location and there was a large military presence in others during Sunday's election. Candidates also tried to influence voting on the day of polling, she added.

Although most Yemenis people are illiterate, the country is the first on the Arab Peninsula to hold universal elections for parliament.

Its efforts to establish a democratic system are seen as vital to continuing foreign aid to Yemen, with the Netherlands and Germany

topping the list of donors.

The elections have been marred by shootings and attacks throughout the impoverished country, with the latest killings bringing the death toll to 27 during the elections.

Two IIP members were killed late Tuesday in an ambush 100 kilometres north of Sanaa, party officials said, on a day of violence in which eight people died.

According to IIP's secretary-general, Mohammad Al Yadumi, the attacker was then killed and his assailant also murdered so as to not leave any trace, bringing the death toll in that incident to four.

Mr. Yadumi demanded that the GPC stop "meddling and falsifying the vote counting in several regions."

He accused the president's party of trying to prevent IIP from "gaining more than a certain number of votes."

Mr. Yadumi warned that if these violations continue, his party "will withdraw, without any regret from the electoral process and offer as a present to the GPC the seats that our candidates have won."

He also told reporters that

(Continued on page 2)

Israel plans roads for West Bank settlers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel's Defence Ministry has drawn up a \$300 million plan to build new roads in the West Bank for Jewish settlers to avoid Palestinian-ruled areas, an Israeli newspaper reported Wednesday.

If approved, the plan would entail widespread expropriation of Palestinian lands, the Haaretz newspaper reported, quoting defence ministry sources.

The project involves paving some existing dirt roads and laying major new routes for settlers in the West Bank, including a second north-south road through the Jordan Valley and a thoroughway cutting across the northern West Bank, it said.

A number of roads for purely military use would also be built under the project which the Haaretz said would cost one billion shekels (\$300 million).

No budgetary approval has yet been granted for the plan, which is under discussion "at the highest levels of the defence establishment," the paper said.

A defence ministry spokesman had no immediate comment when asked about the

report.

The Jewish state began building so-called bypass roads for settlers when it granted autonomy to major West Bank towns in late 1995 under the Oslo peace accords.

Palestinians say each road project necessitates the seizure of hundreds of hectares of Arab lands.

The roads also further isolate Palestinian areas of the West Bank by creating Israeli-controlled axes across the territory.

In February, the Israeli government already gave approval to construction of a controversial new road system around Arab East Jerusalem.

The project drew a quick rebuke from the United States which said the construction would prejudice scheduled negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on the final status of the territories and Arab East Jerusalem.

The peace process has already been thrown into crisis by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policy of expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and building new housing for Jews in Arab East Jerusalem.

Israel opens West Bank borders to Palestinians

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel opened its borders to 55,000 Palestinian workers Wednesday, but the move did little to dent Palestinian anger over the stalemate in the peace process under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Lifting travel restrictions imposed five weeks ago following a Palestinian suicide bombing in Tel Aviv which killed three Israeli women, the army authorised 28,000 workers from the West Bank and 27,000 from the Gaza Strip to reach day jobs inside Israel.

Palestinian labour official Al Mudalal said 29,000 Palestinians out of 34,000 who had so far received their travel authorisations actually entered Israel to work on Wednesday. Only

married men over the age of 29 were authorised to enter Israel. This excluded some 15,000 Palestinians who have work permits but are under 30 from benefiting from the easing of the closure, said Hanan Rabin, a spokesman for the military administration in the territories.

"This restriction was imposed because terrorists are usually single men under 30," he said.

Mr. Rabin also acknowledged that even with the eased restrictions, Palestinians were finding it increasingly difficult to find jobs in Israel due to competition from foreign workers.

Since Israel began regu-

(Continued on page 2)

If extradited by the U.S., Abu Marzouk welcome in Jordan

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan on Wednesday said that it will grant shelter to the former politburo chief of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), Musa Mohammad Abu Marzouk, if he is extradited from the United States, the state minister for information affairs, Samir Mutawe', said.

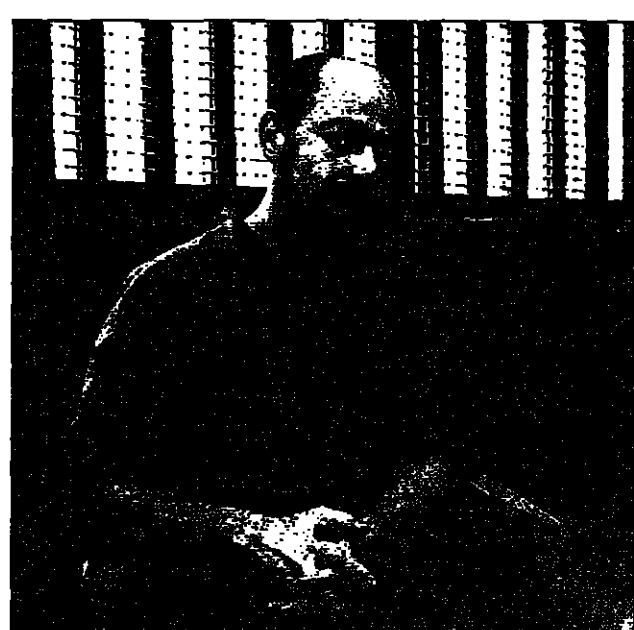
"His Majesty King Hussein, purely on humanitarian bases, has decided to permit Mr. Abu Marzouk to come to Jordan," Dr. Mutawe' said.

"His Majesty's decision stems from Jordan's principles that focus on supporting the Palestinian people and removing obstacles that impede their path and hamper their quest for peace, to win their rights on their national soil," the minister added.

A senior official was quoted by the AFP saying His Majesty convinced the United States to release Mr. Marzouk adding that "the personal efforts of the King and his credibility with the U.S. administration have been fruitful. The Hamas official will soon be released by Washington and will be able to come to Jordan."

"King Hussein wants this gesture to defuse the crisis sparked by the situation of Mr. Marzouk whom Israel asked the United States to extradite," the official who asked not to be identified said. Hamas politburo member Mohammad Nazal told the Jordan Times that Abu Marzouk will soon arrive in Jordan.

"We have not received any information from the Jordanian side on Mr. Abu Marzouk's release but we welcome any step in that direction," Mr. Nazal said. "We do not know when he will arrive here," he said, but continued, "There are contacts between Abu Marzouk's attorneys in New York and the U.S. immigration authorities and I think a formula on his release will be reached



File photo shows Musa Mohammad Abu Marzouk in a prison interview room, April 11, at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre in New York (AFP photo)

pretty soon."

"We believe that Jordan's decision to grant Mr. Abu Marzouk refuge is the first step towards his release," Mr. Nazal said.

A three-man Hamas team including Khalid Mish'al, the group's politburo chief, Ibrahim Ghosheh and Mr. Nazal met with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali last week and discussed Mr. Marzouk's release.

"Dr. Majali informed us that the Kingdom was ready to receive Abu Marzouk if the United States requested his extradition to Jordan and I believe that there are contacts between Jordan and the United States on this regard," Mr. Nazal added.

He said that Mr. Marzouk rejected a U.S. condition to sign a forced confession indicating his involvement in military attacks against Israel as a prerequisite for his release.

"Abu Marzouk declined to sign any document that links him and the group to attacks against Israel and will never sign such document," Mr. Nazal said in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times.

The Jordanian move to grant asylum to Mr. Marzouk would put an end to the 22-month old dilemma of the Hamas leader who

was arrested at J.F. Kennedy Airport in New York on July 1995 for alleged violation of immigration regulations.

The Hamas leader, who has a residency permit, has been living in the U.S. since 1982.

A New York court judge said that there was enough evidence to prove Mr. Marzouk was involved in a series of attacks against Israel which left 47 killed and hundreds injured, AP reported.

Mr. Abu Marzouk denied any link to anti-Israel attacks insisting that his role was merely political and had nothing to do with violence against Israel.

Israel demanded Abu Marzouk's extradition in order to try him over an alleged involvement in several attacks against Israel but later changed its mind claiming the extradition would give a reason for Hamas to commit more attacks.

Political analysts however said that there is no solid evidence to incriminate him and the result of any trial would be his release. If he was tried in Israel and released, Israel would lose the opportunity to extradite him out of the West Bank.

(Continued on page 2)

Israel says Arab dies in crash, PNA says was shot by police

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — A man travelling in a car from the West Bank towards Jerusalem was killed early on Wednesday at an Israeli roadblock in what Palestinians said was a deliberate shooting and Israelis called a crash.

Israeli police said the driver refused their order to stop at a roadblock. They said they shot at the car's tyres and it slammed into a truck. A police spokeswoman said the identity of either the driver nor the dead man was immediately known.

Palestinian preventive security in the West Bank said the man was shot by Israeli undercover units. The Israeli army denied it.

Another senior Palestinian security official said the killing did not take place at a roadblock, but on a main road in Arab East Jerusalem.

The senior Palestinian security official said the "Israelis were lying about the way they killed the Palestinian man because he was shot dead on a main road inside Jerusalem and very far from Hizmah roadblock."

"The Palestinian was killed by undercover units in civilian clothes and not by the army," said the Palestinian official who did not want to be identified.

Israel Radio, citing police sources, said an undercover unit of the border guards was hunting for a suspected armed militant group near Hizmah when it spotted a suspect car and fired when the driver refused to pull over.

Television pictures taken by Israel's Channel Two showed the front left tyre

(Continued on page 2)

Knesset rejects demand for state inquiry into scandal

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's parliament (Knesset) on Wednesday rejected opposition demands for a state inquiry into the influence peddling scandal that has shaken Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

The Knesset voted down the Labour Party's proposal to set up an official investigating commission by 33-25, with one abstention.

The state prosecution last week rejected police recommendations to indict Mr. Netanyahu and two top aides in the scandal but they

did agree to press extortion charges against Aryeh Deri, a key coalition partner.

Police suspect Mr. Netanyahu in January appointed Jerusalem lawyer Roni Bar-On as attorney general under pressure from Mr. Deri, who allegedly believed Mr. Bar-On would agree to a plea bargain in his ongoing corruption trial.

Mr. Deri heads the religious Shas Party, whose 10 parliament seats are enough to bring down the government. Mr. Bar-On resigned after only one day in office amid

a furor over his suitability for the job. When the allegations surfaced on Israel TV a few days later all sides involved denied them and Mr. Netanyahu called for a police investigation.

On April 20, Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein said Mr. Netanyahu's actions raised disturbing questions, but there was insufficient evidence to try anyone but Mr. Deri.

The decision drew widespread criticism, especially from Sephardim or Middle Eastern Jews, who claimed

the Moroccan-born Mr. Deri was being singled out because of his background. Others maintained the prosecutors were too easy on the premier and noted the cases against Mr. Deri and Mr. Netanyahu were based on the testimony of the same man — Mr. Deri's former attorney Dan Avi-Yitzhak.

The dovish Meretz Party has petitioned the supreme court to force Mr. Rubinstein to prosecute Mr. Netanyahu and Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi as well. The petition is to be considered by the court next week. Although such intervention by the court is rare, there are precedents.

Replying for the government, Communications Minister Limor Livnat accused the opposition of being motivated primarily by a desire to topple the government.

"The moment the conclusions of the attorney general and the state attorney did not please the opposition for political reasons, they began to propose all sorts of devices such as a state commission of inquiry."

Meretz lawmaker Yossi Sarid said the Bar-On appointment "was part of a big plan to turn the justice ministry into a rubber stamp."

which was also attended by presidents of the chambers of industry and commerce.

Prince Hassan, who presented gifts of appreciation to representatives of the labour sector, said that the competitiveness of the Jordanian economy can be ensured by improving quality, pointing to the importance of investing in manpower.

Prince Hassan said that Jordan is able to bring about positive change but stressed the need for cooperation, coordination, transparency and constructive dialogue as essential prerequisites for long-term development.

Crown Prince honours labour

(Continued from page 1)

Addressing representatives of all the sectors of the production process, the Crown Prince said that serving public interest is the objective of governance, and that this goal can be better served with the participation of all concerned.

Prince Hassan also stressed the need to approach security in its comprehensive definition, especially soft security which entails economic and social security that protects human dignity.

Prince Hassan expressed satisfaction over the decision to reactivate the National Guidance Committee which will be an all encompassing effort to comprehensively renew the dialogue over issues of national importance.

The Crown Prince said the diversity and plurality of the Jordanian society are assets that can strengthen the development process and enhance stability.

Prince Hassan also addressed Jordan's relations with the Palestinians, reiterating Jordan's support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the Palestinian national soil.

Prince Hassan's remarks set the tone for a comprehensive discussion, in which Prime Minister Majali participated, of a number of issues pertaining to the labour sector and its needs and concerns.

Dr. Majali said the government is working on a comprehensive national health insurance scheme and is doing all it can to improve the investment environment and reduce unemployment and poverty levels.

But Dr. Majali said that Jordanians need to "overcome the shame culture" when it comes to certain jobs that Jordanians refuse to take.

The discussion, during which representatives of the labour unions expressed appreciation for the Crown Prince's gesture and remarks, also touched on vocational training, wages and efforts to improve the labour market as well as investment environment.

Prince Hassan called for rearranging Jordan's national priorities through thorough and scientific approaches, pointing to the need for developing the area of informatics that can assure accurate knowledge.

In his wide-ranging remarks, the Crown Prince also said that the production of a cost of living index on regular periodic bases is essential for the right assessment of wages and incentives.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

Palestinian legislators jammed off airwaves

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Live television broadcasts of Palestinian Legislative Council sessions have been jammed, in what deputies called Wednesday a move by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to silence criticism by the body.

Transmission of Tuesday and Wednesday's sessions was jammed for the second week in a row, said a technician for the Al Quds Education Channel, an independent, local Ramallah station which has been broadcasting the sessions.

An official with the Al Quds channel, who asked not to be named, said the station had traced the jamming to the Palestinian Broadcasting Company (PBC), which is run by the self-rule PNA.

PBC supervisor Nabil Amr denied PBC was involved and said a group of engineers from the Al Quds channel "came to our station and examined it and agreed we are not even able to interfere with their transmission."

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani, also a council member, said he did not know the source of the jamming. "If it is an official body doing it or not, it should be stopped," he said.

Several deputies accused the PNA, which has long opposed live broadcasts of the 88-member council, of ordering the jamming. "There is a war here between the Palestinian executive and legislature."

They are trying to keep the council isolated from the people because we express our opinions directly," said Hussam Khader.

"I am shocked that they stop an independent station. This weakens democracy here," said Marwan Barghouti.

The jamming adds to the frustration of many deputies who say the council has been ignored by Palestinian media due to pressure from the PNA.

"Unfortunately, the national television (PBC) hasn't covered any sessions. They have ignored us since we were elected," in January 1996, Mr. Barghouti said.

"Palestinians must be allowed to see us. But the authority does not like the idea. We disagree openly and are critical of the authority," said member Zayad Abu Amr, who added that it was "not yet proven that the authority is behind the jamming."

Nabil Amr, also a council member, said the PBC agreed Wednesday with the council to broadcast "selections from the sessions" throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Al Quds station, which covers only Ramallah and northern Jerusalem, has been broadcasting the sessions for the past six weeks.

The channel also distributes tapes of council sessions to other independent local stations in the West Bank towns of Nablus, Tulkarem, and Bethlehem.

Hamas calls for 'rescue' of curfewed W. Bank village

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) called Wednesday for an Arab summit to "rescue" the West Bank village of Surif, which has been under Israeli curfew for 40 days.

"We call for an emergency Arab summit to find ways to save Surif and the rest of the Palestinian lands from Zionist terrorism," Hamas said in a statement received by AFP.

Israel slapped a curfew on Surif, home to 15,000 Palestinians, after one of its residents conducted a bombing in Tel Aviv claimed by Hamas which left three Israelis dead on March 21.

In investigating the bombing, Israeli authorities said they uncovered a Hamas cell

which had killed eight other Israelis in attacks over the past year.

The Israeli army destroyed four houses in Surif and arrested around 60 residents of the village since, according to Palestinian rights groups.

"The continuing, brutal curfew on the village has led to a dangerous lack of foodstuffs and milk for children, which threatens to cause a famine in the village," Hamas said.

The group said it was "surprised by the laxity of the Palestinian authority towards these crimes and its insistence on protests without moving or allowing the people to move in reaction to these crimes."

Israel says Arab dies in crash

(Continued from page 1)

was punctured, the front right side of the hood was bent, there was a gunshot hole in the back right window, and there was no blood inside the car.

The pictures, taken after the body was apparently removed, showed the car by the side of the highway, its headlights on and intact and four Israeli police vans stationed around it. A remote-controlled bomb detonator went from one of the police vans towards the car and then back.

Wednesday's shooting was the second deadly incident in the West Bank since Monday, when Israeli soldiers shot and killed a stone-throwing youth in a village near the town of Hebron.

King, Netanyahu optimistic on peace

(Continued from page 1)

also the question of the Jerusalemites—ID carriers and others will be resolved soon because we have a feeling that a lot of people are leaving Jerusalem because they do not carry the Israeli IDs there and this is again something causing a great anguish amongst us and Palestinians."

The King said that despite setbacks in the peace process he was optimistic and he "would like to suggest that the process is alive, that we are facing a moment of slowness...but I hope that we will see it pass and we will see Israeli-Palestinian negotiations with the help of all those interested in establishing peace."

"We can move away from the public scene and conduct our business more in a manner that would enable us to achieve results. I think there are too many statements from here and there and from everywhere that confuse people, that do not reflect necessarily what is actually happening and cause bitter despair and despondency," the King added.

His Majesty urged the United States to resume its vital role to restart the peace making in the region and said that mediation of other parties are welcomed.

others in this world, and we welcome the efforts of all be it Russia, the co-sponsor of the Madrid conference or be it Europe, but we hope that their efforts would be complementary to that of the United States and we will see all working in harmony to achieve progress and to turn the tide," he said.

"I do not believe that anyone questions the position of the United States, it is always ready to contribute positively to the solution of the problems of this region in terms of its role in the world, and in terms of confidence it enjoys from all sides and I would hope that we and other nations of the world interested in peace will play a supportive role to move ahead," His Majesty said.

If extradited by the U.S., Abu Marzouk welcome in Jordan

(Continued from page 1)

Earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Denise Cote refused to release Mr. Abu Marzouk, saying Israel's decision to suspend extradition procedures did not cancel immigration charges against him.

Chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Louis Freeh, visited the Kingdom last month and met with His Majesty King Hussein and security officials, including the minister of interior, director of the General Intelligence Department (GID) and former Justice Minister Abdul Karim Doughmeh and reportedly discussed with them the extradition of the Hamas leader to the Kingdom.

Israel opens West Bank borders

(Continued from page 1)

early using the practice of sealing the West Bank and Gaza Strip in response to terror attacks in the early 1990s, more than 100,000 foreign workers have been given permission to work in the country, and another 100,000 have entered illegally.

These foreigners have replaced Palestinians in the key agricultural and construction sectors which provided most day jobs for residents of the occupied territories.

As a result many Palestinians who would otherwise be eligible to work in Israel are unable to gain authorisation since permits are only issued once an Israeli employer submits a request for a specific labour with the military and the Palestinian National

Authority (PNA) employment department.

"Palestinians don't have the right to freely wander Israeli towns in search of work," Mr. Robin said. Hussein Al Fugaha, a Palestinian union activist, said the real numbers of Palestinians working in Israel "is far below the official number announced by the Israeli government."

"In reality, the closure has only been partially lifted, when it should be eliminated," he told AFP.

PNA officials also said the decision of lifting the closure was insufficient to revive a peace process thrown into crisis by Israel's policy of expanding Jewish building in Palestinian areas, Arab East Jerusalem.

"Things cannot be normal while settlement continues on Jabal Abu Ghneim," the Jerusalem hilltop where Israel is building a new Jewish settlement, said Ahmad Abdul Rahman, PNA cabinet secretary-general.

The lifting of the closure does not constitute an alternative to the end of settlement building in Jerusalem and throughout the Palestinian territories. The resumption of peace talks depends on respect for commitments," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu reiterated this week he would not halt Jewish settlement building despite Palestinian and international condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

International condemnation.

The United Nations recently reported that the Israeli restrictions on the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1992 had cost the Palestinian economy some \$6 billion in lost revenues.

For 1996, when the territories were sealed almost continually, the Palestinian economy shrunk by nearly nine per cent, while the gross national product per capita fell from \$20,700 in 1992 to \$10,700 last year.

Yemen's ruling party proclaims

(Continued from page 1)

because of tensions in the Hajjah district, GPC and IIP officials have agreed to move the voting boxes in the main city of the province.

At Ibb, 70 kilometres south of Sanaa, a member of the election commission was killed and a soldier was injured during a shootout between the supporters of two independent candidates.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

Sixteen people, including a candidate, were killed in election day violence. Another three people died on the eve of the vote.

Supporters of a losing candidate in the election also hurled a grenade at a voting station in Dhamar, a southern tribal province, killing another soldier, also on Tuesday. Two guards also died in a Tazebomb attack.

JORDAN TELEVISION

TEL 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05Omda, The Gang
14:30Raw Towne
14:45Canary show
15:10They Came From Outer Space
16:00NBA Show
17:00Out of This World
17:30French Programme
19:30News Headlines
19:35Parade
20:00Omda, Chicago
20:30The American Court Show
21:00Kung Fu
22:00News in English
22:35Feature Film
23:59Taranta

PRAYER TIMES

04:21For
05:46Sunrise Dubai
12:33Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:20Maghrib
20:45Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swerif, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 625900
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 827126

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 85457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 67591

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise gradually during the weekend with weather conditions becoming moderately warm and winds westerly, moderate. In Amman, it will be warm and sunny, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Mini/Max Temperatures

Amman08/24

Aqaba14/32

Deserts06/27

Jordan Valley14/31

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 20, Aqaba, 30 Humidity readings: Amman 29 per cent, Aqaba 29 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukkhes Hadeesh5519230

Dr. Ghazi Abu Shikha752405

Dr. Rami Sakkar86457

Dr. Fadi Al Khatib86456

Firas pharmacy661912

Ferdows pharmacy778336

Al Asena pharmacy637055

Nairokh pharmacy625672

Al Salam pharmacy636730

Yacoub pharmacy649445

Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Najib pharmacy647632

IRBID:

Dr. Mazin Abu Bakir276852

ZARQA:

Dr. Issa Al Omari901266

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Department661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade617101



Minister of Education and Higher Education Munther Masri Wednesday opens an exhibition of art works and handicrafts at the Irbid Comprehensive School for girls (Petra photo)

'Government responsible for health coverage of citizens'

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Wednesday stated that the government considers itself responsible for ensuring health insurance for all Jordanians who are not currently able to afford medical treatment.

The prime minister maintained that the government guarantees this right at present for employees and their dependents, but hopes that all will be able to benefit in the future. Dr. Majali was speaking at a meeting with Minister of Health Ashraf Kurdi and the ministry's planning committee during a visit to the Ministry of Health.

He stressed the importance of dialogue among officials within each ministry and department as well as exchanges of consultation and views.

The government is eager to reduce flabbiness in government departments and rehabilitate civil servants, offering incentives and redistributing employees in government departments in a manner as would best serve both the system and the public, the prime minister explained.

Referring to decentralisation policies, Dr. Majali affirmed that the government is continuing to confer additional authority upon governors for the benefit of local communities in various governorates.

Health Minister Ashraf Kurdi outlined the ministry's plans and services and engaged the prime minister in a general discussion regarding health services.

Police seizes cache of firearms

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Badia Police Force reported the seizure of a cache of firearms, ammunition and other items in the Safawi district near the eastern deserts of the Kingdom.

A spokesman for the police force maintained that a patrol unit regulating the eastern regions, north of Safawi, spotted a pick-up truck occupied by three persons.

The truck, he said, had no licence plates.

The officers searched the vehicle and found that it contained a bulldozer engine with spare parts, two automatic rifles and 785 rounds of ammunition which had been smuggled into Jordan.

Another badia patrol unit in a nearby area searched an oil tank truck with a Jordanian licence plate and found that it carried 230 cartons of smuggled cigarettes, the spokesman said.

All those involved in the smuggling operations have been arrested, he added. Meanwhile, Wednesday, the head of

the anti-narcotics division at the Public Security Department (PSD), Colonel Nazih Shreideh, reported that over the past three weeks, police seized 83 kilograms of hashish and one kilogram of heroin and arrested the persons involved in peddling the drugs.

Col. Shreideh affirmed that his office was tipped in regards to a foreigner attempting to sell heroin and that the office apprehended the suspect while in the process of selling one kilogram of the drug.

Nineteen other persons were arrested in the Amman area on suspicion of selling heroin, he said.

All those detained had previous criminal police records, according to Col. Shreideh.

In the past three weeks, he said, his teams have seized 83 kilograms of hashish with the suspected involvement of 80 persons of various nationalities.

RSS, German agency sign executive agreement

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) Wednesday signed an executive agreement on the implementation of a German-Jordanian project to economise energy consumption in industry.

The agreement, signed by Acting RSS President Said Alloush and GTZ Resident Chief Burghard Kehr, aims at aiding both the RSS and the Higher Council of Science and Technology to better utilise energy in Jordanian industry up to such a level as adopted in industrial nations.

This can be accomplished through the instruction of engineers and technicians as well as through the provision of services, research and consultations to help Jordan cease energy wastage and rationalise energy consumption in industry.

It will also improve energy use in different industrial sectors.

Under the programme, the two sides will build an integrated data bank to link the project with similar ones in other nations cooperating with the German agency.

Dr. Alloush voiced Jordan's appreciation for Ger-

man assistance and lauded the long-standing cooperation between the two countries since the 1970s when Germany aided the RSS to develop its infrastructure.

This cooperation has benefited the Jordanian economy as it serves both the private and the public sectors, he added.

Mr. Kehr expressed satisfaction regarding the agreement's conclusion which he described as representing a long-term fruitful cooperation.

"We begin a new stage of action and expect positive results in the coming years," he concluded.

Israeli tourist stabbed in Um Qais

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 30-year old Israeli tourist was stabbed and slightly injured Wednesday morning in the Um Qais tourist area in Irbid, officials confirmed.

The woman, Roline B. Golan, was stabbed in the stomach by a man, identified only as H.G., 22, and described as "unbalanced" by Jordanian officials.

She was part of an Israeli group of 33 who were on a four-day visit to the Kingdom.

Officials said that the woman was treated at Yarmouk Health Centre and later released.

Jordanian officials said they have arrested the alleged assailant and are questioning him.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported that Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Aqel Biltaji visited both the injured tourist and the remaining group, which expressed their appreciation for the Jordanian government's concern.

The group stressed that they will resume their scheduled four-day tour to the Kingdom as planned.

In a news item released by Petra, a Jordanian official stated that the Kingdom has a firm stand on crimes and terrorism, and "condemns these acts irrespective of who committed them or their motives."

New MS study targets Jordanians

By Jeffrey Buckley
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Currently, 200 cases of multiple sclerosis (MS) are under examination in Jordan. In an effort to learn more about the debilitating disease, a new MS study is underway at the University of Jordan Hospital.

Building on the work of Dr. Ashraf Kurdi, Jordan's Minister of Health and Medical Care, medical student Rajiv Sethi, a Fulbright Fellow affiliated with Brown University, is compiling data relating to possible causes of the incurable disease.

Little is known about MS, a debilitating disease which affects the central nervous system and can cause paralysis, but researchers here are investigating possible risk factors associated with MS in an attempt to better understand the disorder.

What medical professionals do know about MS is that it attacks its victims, usually aged 25-40 at onset, with the formation of

lesions in the brain and spinal column. At the site of a lesion, the proteins which hold together nerves' insulating fat layers deteriorate, Mr. Sethi explained in an interview with the Jordan Times.

This process is termed demyelination and as a result of demyelination nerve impulses do not flow properly, he said.

Mr. Sethi likened an afflicted nerve to a frayed garden hose which leaks due to holes in its rubber sheath.

He said some possible effects of this improper flow of nerve impulses range from numbness and tingling to incontinence or blurred vision depending on the location of the lesion in the central nervous system. Onset of the disease is gradual and in advanced stages it can cause seizures and paralysis, Mr. Sethi explained.

Measures such as hormone replacement treatment, immunosuppressant drugs and even increased intake of vitamin B-12

inhibit the effects of multiple sclerosis, he added.

However, these are not sufficient to curb the effects of the disease entirely and a cure remains yet to be found.

It is not known why the protein which holds nerve insulation together breaks down at lesion sites, but Mr. Sethi is not looking for a cure. He is creating a new approach for understanding the disease by working closely with Dr. Sami Khoury, a professor of medicine at the University of Jordan, currently monitoring the project.

"This research is not aimed at a cure," Dr. Khoury said. "A cure is based on understanding... MS is not fully understood."

He did maintain that some aspects of multiple sclerosis can be better understood through research projects such as Mr. Sethi's.

The difference between this project and past studies is that it examines both genetic and environmental risk factors in Arabs who

have acquired the illness, according to Mr. Sethi.

He added that the majority of previous projects involving MS risk factors have dealt either with genetic or environmental influences but had not incorporated both factors in a major study.

Information gathered from a previous MS genetic risk factor study in the region by Dr. Najim Din and colleagues has shown that Palestinians, being more genetically predisposed, are twice as likely as Jordanians to acquire multiple sclerosis.

The goal of the research, slated to be completed next summer, is to "try to prove that MS in Jordan is caused both by genetic and environmental risk factors," Mr. Sethi maintained.

The Fulbright programme, directed by Alain McNamara, assists many students, such as Mr. Sethi, with funding and research opportunities in various fields including medicine, political science and anthropology.

Four die in road accident

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four people, including three officers, were killed Tuesday in a road accident on the Mafrak-Baghdad highway, officials reported.

The reports described the accident, which occurred at 8:30 p.m., as involving a public transportation vehicle as well as that of the Royal Badia Police.

According to the reports, the Badia Police vehicle, arriving from the Rewished area to Mafrak, hit the public transportation vehicle head on.

Traffic officials blamed the driver of the second vehicle, Khaled Mishref Sardieh, 24, for taking the wrong lane.

Mr. Sardieh was killed in the accident.

The deceased were all first class privates from the Royal Armed Forces and identified as: Nabih Ibrahim Mohammad, 35, Amin Mohammad Ibrahim, 35, and Samir Abdul Karim, 37.

In other incidents, two armed forces personnel were killed and two others were injured in a fire at the 12th Mechanical Division which belongs to the Jordan Armed Forces.

According to one official, the cause of the fire was an electrical failure. No further details were available.

The deceased were identified as, Corporal Ibrahim Aref Hameideh and Private Abdul Aziz Yassin.

The two injured in the accident were identified as Abdullah Salim and Ali Mohammad, both suffering from burns in different parts of their bodies and listed in fair condition.

Meanwhile, Irbid police are investigating the death of a 30-year old woman who was Wednesday found burnt beyond recognition in her house in the Sharqi neighbourhood.

An official source told the Jordan Times that the woman, Jalileh Abdul Jalil, was found in her bedroom near the Nurses Housing Complex, with gasoline traces on her body.

The official added that an autopsy will be performed on the woman's body to determine the cause of her death.

In other accidents in the Kingdom, three people, including one child, were killed in separate accidents.

In Zarqa, police reports said that a five-year old child, identified as Hussein Mohammad, was killed after being struck by a vehicle.

The reports said that the driver of the vehicle, identified only as Z. S.35, was at fault for failing to yield to pedestrians.

Two people died of electrocution in two separate accidents in Mafrak and Irbid, police reports said.

Subhi Ibrahim, 28, died while attempting to disconnect wires from an electricity box in the building he lived in in Irbid.

In Mafrak, a 23-year-old woman, identified as Khitmech Iyadeh, died of electrocution. The report gave no further details.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Farmer's market to open at Marj Al Hamam

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Supply has initiated measures to construct a zone for farmers to display agricultural products and sell them directly to consumers. A ministry official Wednesday said that the zone or open market place will be located near the Amman International Fair Centre at Marj Al Hamam, west of Amman. The official maintained that farmers will be allowed to rent spaces for their goods for nominal fees. The market place will be opened in the next few weeks, he said.

Aqaba workshop on children opens today

AQABA (Petra) — A two-day workshop on children will open today in Aqaba during which several reports will tackle children-related problems in the Aqaba region. The workshop, in which 100 local children are slated to participate, also entails dialogues between various sectors and departments of the governorate. It will be held at the Social Development Centre.

Croatian dignitary concludes visit to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The commander of the Croatian Armed Forces Pavao Milijavac Wednesday concluded a several-day visit to Jordan. During his stay, the commander was received by Jordanian leaders and visited a number of military positions and archaeological sites. Mr. Milijavac was accompanied to the Amman airport by HRH Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein, Field Marshal Abdul Hafiz Marei Kaabneh, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and other senior army officers.

Minister opens administrative seminar

JERASH (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan Wednesday opened a seminar on local administration for mayors. He emphasised his ministry's determination to help local councils shoulder their responsibilities through improving staff efficiency and performance. He told the meeting at the Jerash-based Philadelphia University that the ministry will also provide technical, financial assistance and advice. Mr. Kreishan urged local councils to develop long-term strategies and seek to achieve them.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

*Piano recital by Swiss Pianist, Werner Bartschi at Mövenpick Hotel, Petra at 8:00 p.m.

ANNUAL SPORTS DAY

*Second annual sports day at Amman Academy, Khaldi on Friday (10:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.)

EXHIBITIONS

*Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Dorothy Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artsana, Jabal Anzaman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858), until May 10.

*Exhibition by the San Francisco-based Palestinian-American architectural photographer Said Hisham Nuseibeh entitled "The Farthest Mosque," at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until May 8. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists.

Conservation project enters second phase

AMMAN (J.T.) — The conservation of the Azraq Oasis and Dana Wildlands — the largest project undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jordan — officially entered its second phase today with a signing ceremony between the Ministry of Planning and the UNDP, according to a UNDP statement.

The project agreement, which aims to consolidate the achievements of the first phase, was signed on behalf of the government by Minister of Planning Dr. Rima Khalaf, and UNDP Resident Representative, Jorgen Lissner.

Funded through a \$6.3 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), phase one of the Azraq/Dana conservation projects achieved considerable success since it was first launched in 1994, the statement said.

The Azraq Oasis Conservation Project became one of the first in the world which attempted to restore an arid zone wetland ecosystem. Using an innovative technique of reverse pumping, ground water was channelled back into the Azraq Basin through existing pipe networks, according to the statement.

In Dana, the protection of biodiversity has been improved with a management plan which regulates the flow of visitors, vehicles and grazing in the nature reserve.

One of the major achievements of the project was to encourage income-generating activities among the local community, according to the statement.

After the old irrigation system was restored in Dana, for example, many villagers began growing organic fruit and herbs, which are now dried and sold in the village gift shop and stores in Amman.

With a GEF grant of \$1.95 million and a government contribution of \$750,000, the second phase of the Azraq/Dana projects will address the pressures exerted on the two ecosystems by development and mass tourism, the statement reported.

During the 1994-95 period, Jordan witnessed a 40 per cent increase in the tourism trade. As a result, the project has underlined the importance of nature conservation and environmental protection, while simultaneously promoting eco-tourism, according to the statement.

The project will also focus on the institutional strengthening of the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), the non-governmental organisation entrusted with managing the Azraq and Dana reserves.

European Commission grants ECU 113,000 to women's business club

AMMAN — Under the MEDA-Democracy, the European Commission has contributed 113,000 European Currency Units (ECU) to a grassroots project promoting women's equal access to the 1997 parliamentary elections in Jordan, according to a European Community statement.

The project, implemented by the Business and Professional Women Club, aims at increasing women's representation and participation in politics, increasing women's human rights awareness, encouraging women to enter and participate in the electoral process as voters and candidates, and establishing networks among women, from the local to the national level in order to achieve unity and consensus on common causes and exercise influence as pressure groups, the statement said.

The European Commission's contribution, which represents 91% of the total project cost, will be used in the organisation of lectures, seminars and training courses, as well as production of publications. These activities will focus on encouraging women to register as voters, collect their ballots and vote on election day, as well as enhancing and developing political skills of women leaders, thereby increasing their opportunity to stand as candidates.

The training courses will open on May 14 at the premises of the Business and Professional Women Club, according to the statement.

The European Union's MEDA-Democracy Programme was set up in 1996 at the initiative of the European Parliament, following the Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Barcelona.

With a budget of ECU 90 million for 1996, it is intended to apply the principles enshrined in the Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, particularly in the political field. The programme focuses on support for measures to promote democracy, the rule of law, civil and socio-economic rights and the protection of vulnerable groups, the statement concluded.

Seminar covers reverse migration

AMMAN (J.T.) — "Return to the Land" was the title of a seminar, organised at the University of Jordan, by the university's Faculty of the Arts in conjunction with the German Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF).

Faculty Dean Abdul Rahman Shain affirmed that agricultural lands in the Kingdom constitute an important natural resource, to be safeguarded and protected from environmental hazards. He said that every possible effort should be made to encourage the return of people from urban to rural regions and help attain a balanced regional agricultural development policy.

This seminar tackles a vital issue of concern for local communities as land is the source of food and therefore the basis of human civilisation, Dr. Shain said.

A return to the land involves social, economic, political and cultural considerations, he maintained.

Participants discussed the most appropriate method for making the return to the land a successful phenomenon. A FNF representative asserted that the institution hopes to help countries in the Middle East succeed in reversing migration from urban to rural regions. He explained that in Jordan, the town of Ajloun is considered as exemplary. Reverse migration to Ajloun resulted from a rise in unemployment and the rising cost of living in urban regions, he stated.

Death toll in China rail crash seen above 100

BEIJING (R) — The death toll from a train crash in central China could exceed 100 after rescue workers Wednesday clawed into the wreckage of a carriage they had failed to reach earlier, officials said.

"There is little doubt that the death toll will be about 100 or more," a media official in Yueyang County in Hunan province said by telephone.

More than 1,000 Paramilitary People's Armed Police and rescue workers used cranes to move wreckage of the two trains and to open a carriage they had been unable to reach since one train ploughed into another Tuesday morning, the official said.

More bodies and injured were found in the coach, he said.

Several local media officials said the toll had already exceeded 100 but declined to give a specific figure.

Government officials handling rescue work declined

to say how many had been killed or injured, saying this was a state secret.

Officials were investigating the cause of the crash, but initial reports showed human error and a failure to switch the points for one of the trains might be to blame.

Rescuers toiled all Tuesday and through the night to search the twisted carriages lying across the track at Rongjiawan Station, some 1,350 kilometres south of Beijing.

By early morning Wednesday they had pried most of the dead and injured from the wreckage.

"The rescue workers are still digging for people," said one witness reached by telephone at Rongjiawan Station.

The crowded No. 324 passenger train, travelling north on the main trunk line between the southern boomtown of Guangzhou to Beijing, crashed into the back of the stationary No. 818 Tuesday, a Yueyang government official said.

Most casualties were on board the No. 324 train. All three drivers of the train were killed, the official said.

Some of the casualties were travellers waiting on the Rongjiawan platform, the Yueyang official said.

The force of the collision sent carriages rearing up on to the station platform, crushing to death or injuring waiting passengers, he said. Thirteen carriages were derailed.

Local officials placed the death toll in China's worst train accident for several years at 67 by 1.00 a.m. Wednesday (1700 GMT Tuesday), with more than 260 injured. At least 90 of the injured were in serious condition, officials said.

"We expect some of the more seriously injured will not survive," said a doctor at a hospital in Rongjiawan. The casualty toll could have been much higher, but heavy rain at the time of the crash prevented a fire, officials said.

"God blessed us," the

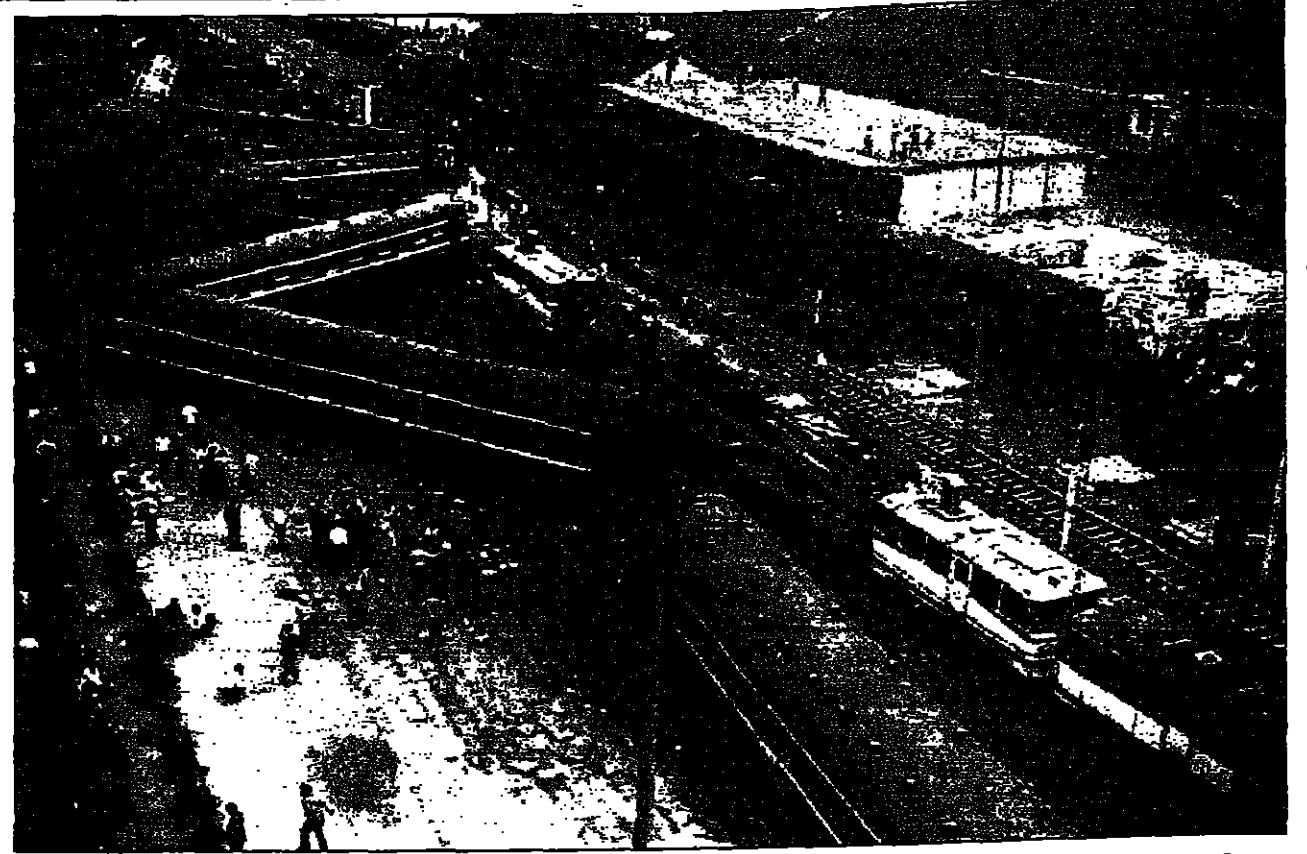
Yueyang official said. "There was an explosion when the trains crashed but the heavy rain prevented the big fire that would certainly have happened otherwise."

"The explosion sounded like a huge bomb," the witness said.

The crash comes less than a month after China upgraded the speed of its trains, which have for years travelled at a snail's pace. China's trains accelerated on April 1, with those on the main Beijing-Guangzhou line speeding up to 140 kph — the fastest in China — from a previous 97 kph.

Rail remains the most popular method of transport in China and China's trains are usually extremely crowded, with long-distance trains carrying as many as 1,000 passengers.

Safety on China's railways has improved in recent years after a series of bad crashes in the mid-1980s when hundreds of people were killed.



Derailed carriages rest at Rongjiawan Station in Hunan province after a crowded passenger train ploughed into the back of a stationary train killing 67 people and injuring more than 260. The crash occurred on China's trunk line linking the capital, Beijing, with the southern boomtown of Guangzhou (Reuters photo)

Russian Chechenya negotiator calls for calm; attacks Kulikov

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia's top negotiator in Chechenya, Ivan Rybkin, opened new peace talks Wednesday despite a series of bombings and criticised Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov for his attack on the Chechen separatist leadership.

Mr. Rybkin, the secretary of the Russian Security Council, said Mr. Kulikov's comments Monday's bombing of a railway station in Pyatigorsk, southern Russia, were an attempt to disrupt the eight-month peace process.

"However many stars they have on their shoulders, people should not choke on their own ambitions. ... Those who fight organised crime should not break up the peace process and make political statements," Mr. Rybkin said on arrival in the Chechen capital Grozny. Interfax reported.

On Tuesday, Mr. Kulikov announced that two Chechen women had been arrested for the bombing in Pyatigorsk, which killed two people and hospitalised 15, and declared that the bombing showed the Chechen government was not in charge.

The women have been transferred to prison in Moscow, Russian news agencies said.

The Chechen government denied any involvement in the bombing, accusing the Russian security forces of carrying it out to disrupt negotiations, which began at the end of the 21-month war last August.

Mr. Rybkin was met at Grozny Airport by the chief Chechen negotiator, first Deputy Prime Minister Movladi Udugov, the head of the Chechen Yunko Oil Company, and other officials, ITAR-TASS said.

Interfax reported earlier that Mr. Rybkin would meet with President Aslan Maskhadov.

Boris Berezovsky, deputy secretary of the Russian Security Council, accompanied Mr. Rybkin.

Meanwhile President Boris Yeltsin, on holiday in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, met with Mr. Kulikov.

The Chechens, who declared independence in 1991, drove out Russian troops in the war, which killed tens of thousands of people and left the tiny republic in ruins.

Moscow continues to insist Chechenya is part of Russia and talks on future relations and economic aid for Chechenya have bogged down over the last few months. Throughout the war, Mr. Kulikov was one of the key backers of a military solution.

Tajik leader hurt in grenade attack

DUSHANBE (AFP) — Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov was injured early Wednesday when a lone assailant hurled a hand grenade at him and his entourage in Khodzhen, a presidential spokesman said.

The spokesman, Zafar Saidov, said Mr. Rakhmonov's life was not in danger and he was being treated in the Leninabad District Hospital for a leg injury. Leninabad district chief Kassim Kassimov, his Deputy Akil Akilov and several other people accompanying Mr. Rakhmonov were also injured in the 10:30 a.m. (0530 GMT) attack.

The assailant threw the grenade just after Mr. Rakhmonov, 44, had got out of his car and was heading to a theatre for a concert to mark the 65th anniversary of the local university. Mr. Saidov told AFP.

Security forces arrested the man, named as Firdavs Dostboyev.

"This terrorist act has obviously political overtones," Mr. Saidov said, adding that the arrested man had taken part in anti-government protests in May 1996.

Khodzhen was also the stronghold of Mr. Rakhmonov's opponent in the 1994 presidential elections.

Earlier this month an operation by Tajik security forces to end a hostage crisis at



Tajikistan President Emomali Rakhmonov

a prison in Khodzhen left 21 inmates dead and another 22 hospitalised, Interior Ministry officials said.

But it was not clear whether the attack on Mr. Rakhmonov was connected with that incident.

Mr. Rakhmonov seized power with Moscow's backing in December 1992, after toppling an Islamic-Democratic coalition in the capital Dushanbe. His neo-Communist government has been battling the Islamic rebels since then, but fighting has tapered off in the last few months amid progress in peace negotiations.

Thousands of Russian troops are posted along the mountainous 1,100-kilometre Tajik-Afghan border, helping Mr. Rakhmonov's forces to keep out the Islamic guerrillas based in northern Afghanistan.

Russia's chief mediator in the Tajik peace talks, Maxim Peshkov, said the negotiations must continue, and blamed "certain extremists who are not interested in peace."

"I hope the peace process will not be affected. The opposing sides have moved close enough together" for the talks to continue, he told AFP by telephone from Dushanbe.

The Tajik government and Islamic opposition opened a new round of U.N.-sponsored peace talks in Tehran earlier this month, and are due to meet there again on May 6 to sign two political protocols.

Tajikistan's Foreign Minister Talbak Nazarov headed the government delegation in Tehran and the opposition was led by deputy leader of the Islamic Coalition, Akbar Turajonzadeh.

Mr. Peshkov said that in the past six months both sides had "made real progress" toward reconciliation.

A previous round of peace talks was held in Moscow in February, focusing on integration of the rebels into the national armed forces.

The two sides agreed in Moscow in December to form a National Reconciliation Commission which would lead to proportional representation in a future post-war government.

Argentine mothers mark 20 years fighting injustice

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentina's mothers of Plaza de Mayo Wednesday mark the anniversary of their campaign against the military's brutal dirty war, just as determined as when they first tied on their trademark white headscarves 20 years ago.

They first met in Buenos Aires' Plaza de Mayo on April 30, 1977, in silent protest at the disappearance of their sons and daughters — some of the tens of thousands abducted, tortured and killed by the military in their brutal war on leftist guerrillas and anyone vaguely suspected of sympathising.

Under the slogan "20 years, not one step back" they are staging anniversary events to show that until they are given their loved ones' bones to bury, the mothers will carry on marching round the plaza every

Thursday afternoon.

Over the years their saintly maternal image has taken on a hard, radical edge.

President Carlos Menem, butt of some of their most bitter recriminations for signing a pardon for "dirty war" criminals in 1989, accused them after their recent presence in a violent student protest of "showing solidarity that justifies the type of violence we Argentines have already lived through."

And while there will be prizes Wednesday for respectable sympathisers such as Danielle Mitterrand, Catholic clergy and theatre stars, the mothers' sympathies have become more radical as the years pass.

Hebe de Bonafini, the combative 68-year-old leader of the larger and more radical group, recently led a failed mission to mediate in the Lima hostage crisis. Her sympathies were clearly

with the Marxist MRTA rebels, not their 72 hostages.

A bespectacled housewife with two sons among the ghostly ranks of the "disappeared," known simply as Hebe to millions of Argentines, she is not shy about her sympathies with the MRTA. Mexico's Zapatista rebels or any other radical group.

"Our children live on in every one who fights: With the Zapatistas, the Colombians, Paraguayan peasants and maybe now the MRTA," she told Reuters one recent Thursday in the plaza.

Nor does she shy from comparing Menem with ex-dictator Jorge Videla, blaming his neoliberal reforms for unemployment and poverty which she argues is a violation of human rights.

"Through the years we have grown and we now know human rights are violated whenever a man has

no job," she said.

Mrs. Bonafini relishes the controversy and says she is looking forward to her upcoming trial for allegedly slandering army chief Gen. Martin Balza by calling him "murderer."

Many Argentines question the mothers' espousal of social protests that apparently have little to do with human rights.

But few doubt their courage for raising a lone voice of protest back in 1977 — courage which cost their founder Azucena Villaflor and many other early mothers their lives.

Marcela Bordenave, member of Congress for the opposition Frepaso, wants April 30 named "Day of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo" in homage to "those who decided to cast light in the darkness and break the silence to find out what happened to their children and grandchildren."

Friend testifies McVeigh planned Oklahoma bombing

DENVER (R) — Timothy McVeigh, angry over the 1993 assault on the Branch Davidian cult compound in Waco, Texas, decided to blow up the Oklahoma City federal building because he believed agents from the Waco and were inside, a key prosecution witness testified Tuesday.

Tim Fortier, who is testifying with immunity from prosecution at the accused bomber's murder and conspiracy trial, said McVeigh was so angry he told her he planned to build a bomb with cooking fuel and ammonium nitrate in barrels in a rented truck.

Mr. McVeigh is accused of using the huge truck bomb that destroyed the Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995 and killed 168 people.

Mr. McVeigh was upset about the FBI assault on the Branch Davidian compound and he believed "the government had murdered the people at Waco," Fortier testified.

Mr. McVeigh decided to "take action against the government" and bomb the Murrah building.

"He said it was an easy target and it was a building that housed some of the

people involved in the Waco raid," she testified.

Branch Davidian cult leader David Koresh and about 80 followers died in flames after a botched FBI raid on their Waco compound on April 19, 1993. Since then Waco has been a rallying cry of the right-wing militia movement and it was on the two-year anniversary of the Waco raid that the Oklahoma City bombing occurred.

Mrs. Fortier, whose husband Michael also is among the prosecution's witnesses in the case, said Mr. McVeigh illustrated how he would build the bomb by using Campbell's soup cans on the floor of her trailer in Kingman, Arizona.

"He placed the cans on the floor in the same arrangement he would place them in the truck," she said, adding that he told her "it would get the most impact that way."

Mrs. Fortier, dressed in a conservative charcoal gray suit with a black velvet collar, said she did not try to dissuade Mr. McVeigh because she did not believe he was capable of the bombing.

But she said she now feels

responsible, knew it was Mr. McVeigh when the bomb went off and believes she could have stopped it.

As she said, "I wish I could have stopped it," her calm voice broke and she buried her head in her hands for a moment.

Outside the courtroom, Janice Coverdale, whose two young Grandsons Elijah and Aaron died in the bombing, said Mrs. Fortier's words made her angry.

"She knows all it would have taken was one phone call," said Mrs. Coverdale.

Mr. McVeigh watched impassively, as he has throughout his trial that began last week. He has pleaded not guilty and faces the death penalty if convicted.

Asked at the end of the day if Mrs. Fortier's testimony was damaging to his client, defence attorney Stephen Jones said, "wait until tomorrow and ask me then."

On Tuesday, she described in great detail knowing Mr. McVeigh for about eight years. He and her husband met in the army, she said, and had remained friends.

Michael Fortier has admitted in a plea agreement with the government that he

knew about Mr. McVeigh's alleged plans and did nothing to stop him. He has not yet testified and is expected to be one of the prosecution's most incriminating witnesses.

His wife also said she helped Mr. McVeigh make a fake driver's license he allegedly used to rent the truck for the bombing.

She said Mr. McVeigh told her he had compiled explosives, including some stolen from a quarry in Kansas, and that Terry Nichols, who will be tried separately in the case, was going to mix the bomb.

She said Mr. McVeigh grew sullen when her husband refused to agree to plans to pick him up in Las Vegas after the bombing. She also said Mr. Nichols grew frightened about the planned bombing. "Terry wanted out," she said.

The anonymous jury also saw a blackened, twisted rear axle from the rented truck. An identification number from the axle led authorities to a Junction City, Kansas, rental agency, where prosecutors say Mr. McVeigh rented the truck for the bombing.

ter naturally paid no attention to us," it said.

In December, the group had criticised the government for the deterioration of "living conditions for pensioners, the sick and the unemployed," while "the politicians and immigrants are getting along ever better."

SAEPO, which is still investigating those threats, wrote in its annual report published in March that they were issued by mentally deranged people.

Swedish prime minister receives bomb threat

GOTHENBURG, Sweden (AFP) — A letter containing a bomb threat against Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson has been sent to a Swedish daily paper, Swedish police said Wednesday.

The letter sent to Gothenburgs Posten, which stated that a bomb would go off near Mr. Persson, was signed by a group that made previous bomb threats in December, Swedish Secret Police (SAEPO) Chief Anders Eriksson said.

The group, which calls itself "Vi Som Bygde Sverige," or "We Who Built Sweden," signed bomb-threat letters sent to Mr. Persson and large department stores in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö in the days before Christmas, when two defused bombs were found at a Gothenburg bus station and store.

Chief Eriksson said that the new threat "differs from others because it is 'signed' by the same people that wrote the threats in

December but I don't want to say if that makes the threat more serious."

SAEPO has taken the necessary measures to ensure Mr. Persson's safety, he added.

The letter, which begins with the headline "Sweden, a sinking ship," states that "four months have now passed since we demanded, with bomb threats at the large department stores, that certain measures be taken by the Social Democratic government. With his usual arrogance, the prime minis-

Gunmen kill Pakistani Shiite Muslim

LAHORE (R) — Gunmen killed another Shiite Muslim in the Pakistani city of Lahore Wednesday, the latest in a series of sectarian attacks, police said.

They said two unidentified men walked into the office of Qaiser Hussain, a manager in a rubber company, in the Garhi Shahu district at about 9.30 a.m. (0430 GMT) and shot him dead.

Mr. Hussain, a father of six, had been associated with a Shiite religious organisation, running an Imambarah (prayer hall), and was a former member of the Lahore Municipal Corporation.

Pakistan has been shaken by a spate of sectarian killings, blamed on rival Sunni and Shiite militant groups, in the run-up to the Shiite mourning festival of Ashura on May 18.

Mr. Hussain was the third Shiite to be killed in Lahore in as many days. A Shiite doctor was shot dead Tuesday, and an elderly Shiite shopkeeper Monday. A Sunni Muslim militant was also killed in the Punjab provincial capital Monday.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said Tuesday his government would strive for

peace between rival religious groups but would take stern action if they failed to resolve their differences.

"The present government will make sincere efforts to try to bring about rapprochement between the people fighting in the name of Islam," he said. "It is unfortunate that those people who recite Holy Koran and Hadith of the Holy Prophet (Mohammad) have pointed their Kalashnikovs against one another."

Sectarian violence has killed at least 65 people in Pakistan this year and more than 170 last year.

Kinkel says Romania to join EU, NATO in 'foreseeable' future

BUCHAREST (AFP) — German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said here Wednesday he was certain Romania would join the European Union (EU) and NATO in the "foreseeable" future.

Mr. Kinkel, who is on a two-day visit here, mentioned no date nor made any reference to a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit in Madrid in July when the alliance is to announce which former Warsaw Pact states will be the first invited to join NATO.

"Romania has made enormous progress on economic reforms," he said, and "in the foreseeable future will be a member of the European Union and NATO."

Mr. Kinkel made the

statement to reporters at Otopeni Airport, saying his trip came "at a time of major importance for Europe."

"We know that Romania is part of Europe and the Euro-Atlantic structures," he added.

He said that at the top of his agenda during talks with Romanian authorities, including his counterpart Adrian Severin, President Emil Constantinescu and Prime Minister Victor Ciorbea, will be "two problems of concern to Romanians: Their integration into the European Union and NATO."

Romania has been lobbying hard — notably with Washington — to be one of the first Eastern European countries to be admitted to NATO but so

far the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are considered the frontrunners.

Canada, France, Greece, Italy and Turkey have all expressed support for Romania's first-group bid.

Mr. Constantinescu recently predicted that Germany would finally lend its support to Romania's bid to join both institutions in order to stand by France but also for regional security.

Last month, Mr. Severin also met with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who said that "the doors to NATO are open to Romania" even if the country is not part of the first wave.

Zaire rebels vow to take their war to Kinshasa

LUBUMBASHI, Zaire (R) — Zairean rebels Wednesday shrugged off President Mobutu Sese Seko's refusal to hold talks and said they would take their war to the capital Kinshasa.

A senior aide to rebel chief Laurent Kabila told Reuters the rebels had nothing to lose from Mr. Mobutu's refusal to meet Mr. Kabila on a South African Navy ship.

Rebel foreign policy strategist Bizima Karaha said: "No change in venue will be accepted by us."

The aide said rebels were consolidating a push towards the capital from Kikwit, 390 kilometres east of Kinshasa, to eject Mr. Mobutu from Africa's third largest country.

"We lose nothing by not meeting Mr. Mobutu. If anything we have bent backwards too much for the man given our military superiority on the ground," he said.

"We are more than happy to take the war to Kinshasa and end Mobutu's arrogance. In fact, our forces are consolidating their approach towards Kinshasa. He (Mobutu) must know it is the end game."

Asked whether Mr. Kabila, who had accepted talks with Mr. Mobutu on the South African ship, would agree to a change in venue, Mr. Karaha shook his head: "No way. Why should we accept that?"

Mr. Mobutu prefers French-speaking Gabon but Mr. Karaha said it was out of the question. "We are not going to Gabon at all. We can go to South Africa. We can go to the vessel but that's it."

South African hopes of a meeting between Mr. Mobutu and Mr. Kabila were dashed Tuesday night when a U.S. diplomat in Lubumbashi said Mr. Mobutu had rejected a proposal to hold the talks at sea.

The diplomat, travelling with U.S. envoy Bill Richardson, said Mr. Mobutu told Mr. Richardson Tuesday he would not attend talks on a ship offered by South African President Nelson Mandela.

"Mobutu told Richardson there is no way he would be travelling to a ship for talks with Kabila," the diplomat said after talks between Mr. Kabila and the U.S. envoy. "So once again the venue for the face-to-face meeting remains a problem."

Mr. Mobutu, who has cancer, has ruled out South Africa as a venue as too far. Kabila ruled out Congo's capital Brazzaville, over the river from Kinshasa on security grounds.

South Africa said Wednesday it was surprised at the hitch to the planned Zairean peace talks and urged both sides to hurry to the negotiating table.

South African Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad told state radio Wednesday he had not expected the setback. "The urgency of the situation necessitates that the talks start very quickly... We would urge both parties not to besitate any more, and not to cause any more delays, and to move quickly to the negotiating table."

Mr. Kabila's forces have captured more than half of the vast central African state since October and seized Kikwit Tuesday. Mr. Kabila

says talks must be brief and only discuss Mr. Mobutu's resignation, otherwise the rebel army will remove him.

Mr. Richardson met Mr. Mobutu in Kinshasa Tuesday before flying to rebel-held Lubumbashi for talks with Mr. Kabila.

On Wednesday he flew to the northeastern Zairean capital of Kisangani to assess the plight of Rwandan refugees and was to later fly to Kinshasa for a second round of talks with Mobutu.

Mr. Kabila told Mr. Richardson in Lubumbashi he was willing to be flexible on a 60-day deadline he has given the United Nations to repatriate all Rwandan refugees provided he saw progress.

"We want to see seriousness on the part of the U.N. that repatriation is actually taking place," Mr. Kabila told Reuters.

He said he was still committed to an independent team to investigate alleged killings in the refugee camps but wanted rebels to be represented and consulted on its composition.

Mr. Richardson hit out



A lost Rwandan refugee child cries at Biaro refugee camp, 25 kilometres from Kisangani. Thousands of Rwandan Hutus returned to Biaro camp south of Kisangani Monday, telling of a horrific slaughter that prompted their exodus last week. The U.N. has transported 150 minors and orphans to Kisangani as part of its plan to airlift thousands of Rwandan refugees stranded in the Great Lakes region (Reuters photo)

Wednesday at the human rights record of rebels and said it had to improve.

Mr. Richardson told reporters Washington and the rest of the world wanted to see a full investigation into allegations of a massacre of Rwandan Hutu refugees by Zairean villagers and rebel

troops last week.

"The international community in judging the (rebel) alliance will be considering many things," said Mr. Richardson as he boarded a plane for Kinshasa following his brief visit to Kisangani.

"Will it be a fair alliance, a

democratic alliance? Will it have a proper record when it comes to human rights?" he said. "So far we are disappointed. They must do better."

The rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire has been blamed by refugees and aid officials for

orchestrating an attack by Zairean villagers on Rwandan Hutu refugees south of Kisangani last week.

"This massacre has to be properly investigated," he said. "The world will judge the alliance on their attitude to these helpless refugees."

No crackdown on protests — future Hong Kong chief

HONG KONG (AFP) — Future leader Tung Chee-hwa Wednesday made a fresh promise to maintain freedom of expression in Hong Kong at a public airing of plans to tighten controls over street protests.

Mr. Tung, designated Hong Kong's future chief executive, told the U.S. television network ABC that the territory would never be the scene for a Tiananmen Square-style crackdown.

"It cannot happen here. It will not happen here. I will not allow it to happen here," Mr. Tung said, according to a transcript released by his office.

Mr. Tung, interviewed on the programme Nightline, said Hong Kong's political life was starkly different from that in mainland China.

"Hong Kong is a different world. We have a culture which has demonstrations almost every day," he said.

He added that Democratic Party leader Martin Lee, a stern critic of Beijing, had "very limited... knowledge about what is happening in China." He really doesn't know.

Mr. Lee and others in the pro-democracy camp "will

be free to demonstrate as they please, but I would hope they would abide by the law of Hong Kong if they wish to do so," he said.

"If they want to be martyrs, they will be very disappointed," Mr. Tung said.

Mr. Tung's promise coincided with the end of a three-week consultation period on proposals to ban foreign funding for and links to political groups, allow parties to be banned for reasons of "national security" and make demonstrations subject to police approval.

The scheme has been sharply attacked by Governor Chris Patten, Britain, the United States and human rights watchdogs.

An umbrella group of 32 local organisations announced it would stage a candlelit rally in the business district of Central Hong Kong later Wednesday to voice opposition to the changes.

Mr. Lee's party said it welcomed Mr. Tung's comments to ABC, but remained concerned about the planned legal changes.

"Of course, we welcome that kind of pledge from the chief executive," said Anthony Cheung, party vice-

chairman.

But, he said, "there are a lot of suggestions from chief executive's office which do not make people confident."

He said the proposals were "creating a lot of anxiety" in the territory.

However, Democrat legislator Cheung Man-Kwong, who is also a spokesman for Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movement in China, which was set up in 1989 to back pro-democracy protests on the mainland, said Mr. Tung should delete national security from the proposal.

"Our concern is about the law," after the handover, said Mr. Cheung.

"Maybe we will have the right to have demonstrations, but if the law said any demonstration violates the national security, I think it will infringe the freedom of demonstration," he said.

The alliance, which helped hundreds of dissidents flee the country after the crackdown in June 1989, is considered by Beijing as a subversive organisation trying to topple the Communist regime.

"We really don't trust Mr.

Tung," said Miranda Yip, spokeswoman for the Hong Kong People's Alliance for Human Rights, which organised the rally.

"If he upholds the freedom to demonstrate, he should not have proposed to make changes to our civil liberties in the first place," said Ms. Yip. "We think this is a retrograde step of human rights in Hong Kong."

A spokesman for Mr. Tung's office said more than 2,000 "submissions" from groups and individuals had so far been received during the consultation period.

A booklet outlining the views would be published, the spokesman said.

Mr. Tung has refused to say whether the proposals will be scrapped if a majority of views weighs against them.

The bills could be handed to the provisional legislature, Hong Kong's shadow assembly, for vetting by mid-May so that they can be approved before July 1, sources in Mr. Tung's office said.

The proposals followed a decision in February by the National People's Congress, China's parliament, to change the territory's civil liberties laws.

Mexican volcano erupts, but no evacuations

MEXICO CITY (R) — A volcano near the Mexican capital erupted four times overnight Tuesday, spewing red-hot rocks that ignited huge fires on grazing lands and frightened farmers on the mountainside.

"There was this enormous bang in the middle of the night, which woke us all," said Procopio Alechó, mayor of the town of San Nicolas, which lies in the shadow of the Popocatepetl Volcano.

Three other blasts also rocked local villages in the early hours as blocked lava ducts in the volcano yielded to mounting pressure, throwing up red-hot rocks and ash over a radius of 1.6 kilometres, authorities said.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries, although authorities maintained an alert for people living close to the crater at a height of 17,883 feet (5,452 metres). But as activity died down with the daybreak they decided not to evacuate the area around the volcano, which lies only 65 kilometres east of Mexico City.

"It is very improbable that we will see an escalation of activity," Roberto Qaas, in charge of monitoring Popocatepetl at the National Disaster Prevention Centre, told Reuters. "It is now very stable. But it was quite a big puff in the night."

"There is still a yellow alert out, which is the stage between normal and dangerous, but there is no need to be alarmed or to evacuate," Mr. Qaas added.

At dawn, plumes of white smoke still poured from the crater, witnesses said. Residents reported that clouds of ash had fallen in the night, covering houses and fields.

One fire raged over an area of 15 hectares (38 acres) on the side of the snowcapped, Conical Peak. TV Network Televisa said.

N. Zealand, Japan hold wide-ranging talks

WELLINGTON (AFP) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto praised New Zealand's government economic reforms Wednesday, saying he was here to learn from Wellington.

"We have already learned lessons from New Zealand, and there are lessons we still have to learn," Mr. Hashimoto said.

His comments came after he and Prime Minister Jim Bolger held a two-hour meeting, the major event in a day long trip here by Mr. Hashimoto.

There was a strong emphasis on economic reform during the meeting, because Japan is setting out on a similar course to that which

New Zealand has completed.

New Zealand has carried out a sweeping privatisation programme and has a unique Central Bank system whose primary goal is to set a monetary policy that keeps inflation between zero and two per cent per annum.

New Zealand's government is also required to provide a full set of accounts each year and just prior to elections.

When Mr. Bolger was asked by a Japanese journalist what his single most important piece of advice would be on economic reform, he replied: "To be successful it is essential to re-

form right across the board, bringing in all sectors."

Both prime ministers pledged to strengthen ties between the two countries and work on expanding people-to-people links.

Mr. Hashimoto, speaking through an interpreter at a joint press conference, said: "We have reaffirmed our efforts to strengthen links... There is already much co-operation. This visit is part of the Asia-Pacific diplomacy that I started when I took office."

Mr. Bolger described the talks as "an extraordinarily wide-ranging discussion on matters of mutual interest" which covered international and bilateral issues.

Iran accused of being greatest barrier to Taliban recognition

KABUL (AFP) — Iran is the biggest block to international recognition of the fundamentalist Taliban as the government of Afghanistan, a senior militia official told AFP Wednesday.

Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai, the Taliban's deputy minister of foreign affairs, accused Iran of conspiring to stem international acceptance of the hard-line militia, who have yet to be recognised by any one country.

"There is no doubt that Iran is one of the strongest opposition against us," Mr. Stanekzai complained.

The senior official said Iran is blocking recognition in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), an influential 54-member Muslim forum, whilst giving military backing to rival forces.

"They have launched attacks on our western borders, they are running military camps across the border, and are flying in supplies on a daily basis," he added.

"The whole world knows what is Iran, what is their government and what is their policies," he asserted, citing terrorism, airplane hijacking and sabotage as examples of Iran's "unfala-

mic" overseas activity.

But despite Iran's alleged anti-Taliban moves, Mr. Stanekzai asserted that the ultra-purist Muslim militia were forging ahead with their desperate quest for international acceptance.

"In the beginning there were certain problems... but I think the world, especially Muslim countries, are recognising the Taliban as a reality," he said.

He said the Taliban are now receiving more and more foreign delegations and invitations from the OIC and numerous countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United States, Japan and Pakistan.

Mr. Stanekzai also claimed that the militia's hardline rules no longer constituted a major stumbling block to the militia's entry onto the world stage.

"The differences between us and other countries — the main barrier when we came to Kabul — were exaggerated through propaganda of the opposition," he said.

In areas under their control, the Taliban have imposed a strict interpretation of (Shariat) Islamic Law, including the banning of women from work and education.

This and other actions,

such as punishing men who trim their beards and encouraging male residents to wear the favoured turban, caused international uproar when the Taliban seized Kabul September last year.

Mr. Stanekzai asserted that the rules regarding beards and women were part of an "emergency package" to enforce a common identity in a country gripped by over 17 years of bloody civil war.

"Concerning beards, many other religions have them," he said. "In India there are the Sikhs, who have beards and turbans: This is good."

"Jews and Christians should also have beards, but many do not follow their religion properly," he added.

When asked what type of Islamic state the Taliban had in mind for Afghanistan, Mr. Stanekzai said no other Muslim nation could offer a suitable model for the militia, who now control around two-thirds of Afghanistan.

"Many other of these so-called Islamic states do not follow Islamic Law," he said. "It is not a case of what type of Islamic state: For us Islam is pure, and we will follow it."

U.S. army sergeant found guilty on 18 charges of rape

WASHINGTON (AFP) — An army drill instructor at the Aberdeen Military Base in the state of Maryland was found guilty in 18 out of 19 charges of rape, army officials reported.

The six-member military jury is to reconvene Monday to sentence Staff Sergeant Delmar Simpson, who could face life in prison for each conviction. Aberdeen base spokesman George Mercer said.

Sgt. Simpson, a tall, 32-year-old black drill instructor stood at attention when the verdicts were read Tuesday. He may appeal the decision, Mr. Mercer said.

Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said he will wait until Sgt. Simpson is convicted to issue a statement, but Tuesday's verdict

makes it clear that Defence Secretary William Cohen's "zero tolerance" policy toward sexual misconduct in the ranks is being fully enforced.

The Aberdeen Training Base has been in the limelight since late last year due to several alleged cases of rape and sexual harassment by drill instructors. Some 20 instructors were found guilty or are currently under investigation on the charges.

The sex scandal at Aberdeen led to the creation of a Special House National Security Committee Task Force to investigate sex problems in the military. The panel said they planned to extend the probe to other training bases around the country.

Sgt. Simpson is the first

of 12 drill instructors from Aberdeen to stand trial. Military law prohibits adultery and fraternisation, or sexual relations between people of different ranks.

According to testimony at the trial, Sgt. Simpson raped a 23-year-old woman private eight times and a 21-year-old private five times. Some of his victims said they felt compelled to obey his orders, while others feared losing promotions if they spurned his advances.

Although Sgt. Simpson did not use physical force in any of his rapes, under army law intimidation for sexual purposes is enough for a rape charge.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John Shalikashvili, said he considered the Aberdeen

incidents a matter of the sternest discipline.

Despite the military's commitment to stamp out sexual harassment within the ranks, the National Association of Advancement of Coloured People has asked why all 12 accused drill sergeants are black and their women accusers white.

Sgt. Simpson, who had pleaded guilty to 11 counts of consensual sex with trainees for which he could be sentenced up to 32 years in prison, was found not guilty in only seven of 35 different sexual misconduct charges.

One of the 19 rape charges against him was reduced to indecent assault.

Arms bazaar of Khanabad — a wild west in north Afghanistan

KHANABAD, Afghanistan (AFP) — The man examining the AK-47 assault rifle at the arms bazaar in the northern Afghan centre of Khanabad was concerned with improving his home security.

"Every house needs a Kalashnikov, otherwise it will be attacked and looted overnight," he states loudly.

Khanabad, 365 kilometres north of Kabul, an AK-47 in good condition can be bought for around \$80.

Khanabad is like the wild

west without the Texas Rangers," says a Western aid worker based in the area.

A small town with muddy streets and a string of ramshackle shops, Khanabad is under the nominal control of ousted Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, forced from Kabul by the Taliban last September.

The town is run by Mr. Rabbani's ally, Mujahideen faction leader Rasool Sayyaf, whose nephew was gunned down here in a street robbery two weeks ago.

"Neither Sayyaf nor Rabbani can maintain security here," the gun merchants say. "But the Taliban could, of course."

There was a general feeling among the people of Khanabad that the lawlessness of the town can only be tamed by the ultra-pious Taliban movement, who diligently collect all war weapons from civilians in areas under their control.

Khanabad is a district centre of Kunduz province, which has a reputation for bad security in general, and

risky highway travel in particular.

A team of French television journalists travelling by taxi were recently held up at gun-point just south of Kunduz City and robbed of \$7,000. In areas under Taliban control the highways are of free bandits.

The same freebootery and corruption that plagued Rabbani's Kabul government prevails in the north, although the problem has been acknowledged and some attempts made to clamp down on offenders.

Security in the north varies depending on the degree of loyalty to the authority of the relocated ex-Kabul government, Mr. Sayyaf's Kunduz fiefdom was considered worse than Mr. Rabbani's provinces of Takhar and Badakhshan.

"In Khanabad every individual commander is a king," declares an arms dealer whose arsenal consists mainly of 82mm mortar bombs.

He noted that the mini-warlords frequently engage each other in combat, with

the result that entire villages suffer the consequences.

"We need security, because in a shootout between two enemies, we are likely to get shot," he says.

The commanders in the Khanabad area, he adds, compete with each other in marrying new wives, obtaining boy-lovers, acquiring plots of land and amassing money.

Not all the shops in the Khanabad arms bazaar stay open at the same time; there are weekly and seasonal busy periods.

"Dealing in arms is a risky business, without a lot of profit," one weapons dealer said. "To get ahead some merchants also deal in hashish and opium."

During the drug harvest period some arms dealers leave town to check their crops and negotiate with wholesalers who export to the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union.

"There was a Dostum commander who bought 100 seers (700 kilograms) of hashish. He will sell it to Tajikistan for a

400 per cent profit," the gun merchant said.

General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who is based in Mazar-e-Sharif some 300 kilometres west of Kunduz, has joined Mr. Rabbani and other commanders in an alliance to topple the Taliban and recapture Kabul.

If successful, observers wonder how the anti-Taliban alliance will enforce security in the Afghan capital when they have great difficulty doing so in their own home turf.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
 Published 1975
 جريدة عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
 MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
 MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
 GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21977 ALRAJ JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
 Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
 Jordan Times advertising department.

One path to peace

THE ISRAELI prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is neither as innocent nor as stupid as he sounded and looked during yesterday's interview with CNN. He knew very well that when, in the same interview, His Majesty King Hussein said that "the minority of extremists here (in the Arab World) and there (in Israel) have dictated their agenda upon us," he was referring to extremists in Mr. Netanyahu's own government.

Mr. Netanyahu's rhetoric about peace and security, security and closure of the Palestinian territories and settlement in Jerusalem, is neither deluding any one in Israel nor the Arab World nor the global community. Every student of history or politics can see that Israeli government policies, since Mr. Netanyahu took power, are based on one precept — the denial of Palestinian rights in Palestine. Not only does Mr. Netanyahu and his hardline partners deny the Palestinians their rights to their own land, he wants the Palestinian National Authority to renounce these rights and oppress its own people.

Further, Mr. Netanyahu has been turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to King Hussein's continued pleas to the Israeli leader to act with wisdom, courage and humility. He refuses to recognise that if the peace process fails and radicals on both sides call the shots, nothing short of bloodshed and untold misery will ensue.

King Hussein's repeated warnings and his growing sense of frustration did not grow out of a void but, rather, out of a realisation that this is the last chance for peace and we must not lose it for the maximalists on both sides. Palestine must be home to two equal peoples, states and identities.

If Mr. Netanyahu is willing to initiate discreet final status negotiations, as the King suggested, then he will find the Palestinians more than willing to engage him in such a venture. Instead of using the Americans as messengers, as the King rightly observed, the Palestinians and the Israelis, together with all persons of goodwill, should enter into such negotiations soon. Meanwhile, the Americans, who successfully helped the Egyptians and the Israelis to negotiate their Camp David accords in 1978, need to step up their involvement and use their clout to ensure a fair and lasting settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily said Wednesday that the United States, the sponsor of the peace process, has the power to force Israel to comply with the requirements of peace and stop its illegal measures and settlement-building programmes in the Arab territories, but unfortunately it is choosing otherwise. Youssef Abdullah Mahmoud said that in the wake of the latest U.N. General Assembly vote condemning Israel's practices, a senior Japanese government official called on Washington to stop its military aid to Israel to force it to halt its settlement programmes. The writer said that the situation now very much resembles that which prevailed in the aftermath of the 1967 war when the French president, Charles de Gaulle, summoned the then Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban and told him that the honeymoon between Israel and France had ended and no more French assistance would go to Israel before it returns the occupied lands to their owners. The writer said that instead of encouraging the Israelis to pursue their illegal practices, the U.S. can respond to reason and the calls of the U.N. General Assembly and the world community by forcing the Israelis to stop their measures so as to enable the peace process to resume unhindered. He said that America, which has many interests in the Arab World, should take this idea into consideration and avert risking the loss of such interests.

A WRITER for Al Dustour said Wednesday that the recent peace accord between Khartoum and four opposition factions that had been fighting the Sudanese government in the south will not bring about peace to the country but could also encourage the major faction of John Garang to consider reaching a peace treaty with Khartoum. Oreib Rintawi said that the peace accord was a clear step forward, but it remains incomplete unless all the conflicting parties have reconciled and unless the Khartoum regime embraces the principle of political pluralism and free all political detainees. The writer said it is to be expected that the four small factions will stop their fight against Khartoum because the accord has offered them most of their demands, especially the right to separate from Sudan after a four-year transitional period. But he said the eyes will now be turned to John Garang who leads the major opposition group and whose decisions on war or peace is bound to tip the balance in Sudan's very delicate situation.

The View from Academia

Cultural impediments and pursuit of education in the U.S.

Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

IT SEEMS to me that whenever we look for the causes which hinder the performance of individuals in our part of the world, most of the time (though not always), we run into the social (societal) and cultural. What complicates the picture further, and makes the situation more disappointing and vexing, is the fact that when we say "social" or "cultural," we are not talking about a cultural or social factor, phenomenon, reason or cause that is acceptable, but one that is not. In other words, we as Arabs (while cherishing and valuing our social and cultural legacy and roots tremendously) have serious objections to many aspects of our present-day social life or culture, much of which is not (in the opinion of many of us) "truly" or "genuinely" Arab.

The other day, we invited the Head of the Fulbright Commission (FC) in Amman to talk to our students (at the English Department of the University of Jordan) about the cultural aspects affecting Arab students' pursuit of study in the U.S. In the interesting discussion of the subject, a great deal was said.

Among the things that were emphasised was the fact that not all American universities are alike. There are about 3,600 accredited universities (in addition to the many unaccredited). Of those accredited, some are excellent, some are very good, some are good, and some are mediocre and poor. When students intend to study in the U.S., "studying in the U.S." should not be the aim, for there is something false about such assumption. Rather, they should aim to study at this or that university. The 3,600 universities and colleges offer, essentially, 3,600 different experiences.

One thing else was stressed, by way of encouragement. American universities (let's say most of them) care a lot about the foreign student body of their overall population. They make it a point, in other words, to accept students from abroad in order to enrich their campus experience. This is good news for those applying from the Arab World, just as it is for those applying from Southeast and East Asia and Africa, because when they apply they already have this advantage.

But there is also some bad news, especially for Arab students. The bad news is two-fold.

First, it is well-known that admission to American universities is lengthy, laborious and difficult.

Normally (unless you have received a scholarship through an establishment like the Fulbright and such institution itself takes care of your admission, that is), the process takes about a full year. Not only are there so many applications to fill, so many exams one has to take and so many essays that you have to write, the process is also extremely competitive. After a whole year of filling applications, taking exams, writing essays and providing documents of sorts, chances are (and this is what happens in 8 out of 10 cases) one will be rejected. As the president of the U.S. university where I went to graduate school said during a reception held for us the first couple of weeks: "You have passed the most difficult phase of your university life: admission." And indeed, admission to U.S. colleges and universities is by no means routine or matter of course and time.

What I wish to underscore in this context, however, by way of highlighting the cultural factors affecting the admission chances of Arab students negatively (or positively) are two things: According to the head of FC, students who have better chances than others at getting admission are those who do two things, among others: sell themselves well in the application and write well. From my experience with our present-day culture and with our students, I would say that this is bad news for the majority of our students.

For one thing, many of them do not know how to sell themselves — one may say that many do not care to sell themselves. Some students are too shy, too humble and too unconvicted of the importance of presenting themselves in an interesting light. Some are so complacent and self-satisfied, they think their intrinsic worth (whatever that may be) is more important than anything they put on paper. That is the way it is in our present-day culture.

More importantly, however, I believe that most of our students do not have much to sell. American colleges and universities are not just looking for grades; they want, in the application, good recommendation letters, students' involvement in committees, students' involvement in campus and social activities, membership of clubs and associations of sorts, examples of published material, interesting things students have done — in

other words, a whole CV.

What can most of our students present? Grades — What can most of our students present? Grades — What can most of our students present? Grades —

As for writing, the second requirement, most of our students do not write well. They have not been trained well in the art of writing (despite the good course we offer at the university level and the good textbooks); they have inherited bad writing habits from the Arabic "insha" (composition) which is too disorderly, loose, and undisciplined as a process; they do not have the patience to write; and our society of today does not train people to write well nor encourages them to do so. You can easily graduate a straight-A student from our schools and universities who does not know how to write well. (Teaching our students to write well is almost a miracle.)

These two factors affect our students' chances of admissions (positively or negatively — more negatively than positively — tremendously).

Once the student is admitted, two things (among others) affect his/her performance crucially. The first is, again, writing. In most courses at U.S. universities, students (especially at the graduate level) have to write well. Most of the time, they get the course grade solely on the basis of writing.

The second important requirement is the ability to participate in discussions intelligently, diligently, enthusiastically and effectively. One cannot sit and take down notes. One has to ask intelligent questions, argue a point well, agree with others intelligently, disagree convincingly, etc.

Again, at this particular level, our students do not do well. Most of them are reticent, silent, unenthusiastic, un-eager to participate, and lack the skills of subtle argumentation (how to agree or disagree).

The only thing one could advise here is to ask our students to work on their CVs three years ahead of their decision to apply for study in the U.S. and to work on their writing and expression skills. Trivialise nothing; everything counts.

Regulation of Arab securities markets — a legal perspective

By Lu'ayy Minwer Al Rimawi

ALTHOUGH ARAB countries did not participate in the intense global financial deregulation of the 1980s, it is appropriate that they should now focus on tackling their financial services regimes and securities markets regulation. Yet, despite Arab governments' recently acclaimed interest in developing regional securities markets, Arab representation in international regulatory debates remains noticeably absent. It can be also added that throughout the various EBRD conferences, which I have attended on regulatory matters related to securities markets in emerging economies, one would rarely come across any Arab delegation. (Nevertheless, during the Amman MENA economic summit, senior businessmen, fund managers and regional market operators and officials held very constructive workshops on regional capital market developments.)

However, stable macroeconomics conditions, orderly exchanges, competent financial and banking systems, coupled with an effective legal corporate structure which is underpinned by efficacious legal procedures, are all among the prerequisites for well-functioning securities markets.

Nevertheless, if Arab securities markets are to prosper domestically and attract substantial foreign portfolio investments, they should be more receptive to current global regulatory debates. For we live now in an era of integrated and globalised securities markets, where highly complex legal mechanisms and measures are constantly evolving and passed from one jurisdiction to another. Recent globalisation of the securities markets is enabling issuers to raise capital outside their own countries. In 1985, \$4.3 billion in international equity issues were completed worldwide. This market grew to \$20.9 billion in 1987 and \$22.5 billion in 1992.

I will briefly touch upon the most important factors which have led to the recent exponential Arab interest in securities markets (debt and equity).

Taken into their severely less developed regional markets, securities markets in the Arab countries are currently experiencing "considerable" structural reforms. In addition, these reforms are being underpinned by ever-increasing stable macroeconomics conditions in many Arab countries. In the last two years or so, inflation and budget deficits have been dropping steadily, while gross domestic product (GDP) and markets capitalisation have generally been on the increase.

(However, the International Monetary Fund still cautions about the, until very recently, annual average decline of 0.5 per cent of the per capita growth in MENA countries. Moreover, on the eve of the third MENA economic summit in Cairo, in November 1996, it warned the region against continued dependence on favourable external factors to sustain high growth rates and financial balances improvements). Yet, a number of Arab capital markets are slowly gaining "tentative" international confidence, and varying degrees of interest have been exhibited by some investment houses in the U.K.: Flemings Securities, Barings, Foreign and Colonial, Merrill Lynch, JP Morgan and many more. In addition, specialised Middle Eastern mutual funds are currently set up for the purpose of investing in the region. They include Arab Countries Fund (Fleming), Emerging Middle East Fund (Foreign and Colonial), Atlas Maroc (Financiers Atlas/France), Maghreb Fund (Framlington), Maroc Privatisation Fund (GP Banque/France), Middle East Opportunities Fund (Alliance Capital/Luxembourg).

However, the capitalisation and sophistication of Arab emerging markets still constitute a fraction

of the market capitalisation and sophistication in other emerging markets in Eastern Europe, Latin America and South East Asia. Recently, it has been estimated that total capitalisation of Arab securities markets amounts to \$89 billion, against \$1,000 billion shared by the rest of the emerging markets. Nevertheless, the region as a whole is believed to attract less than one per cent of the total capital flows into developing countries, and about 0.3 per cent of foreign portfolio investments.

One must accentuate that the economies of the region differ sharply in their per capita upsurge in Arab interest in securities markets. The spiralling expenditure costs of the Iran-Iraq war and the 1991 Gulf war, dwindling export revenues and global overproduction have forced many of the rich Arab Gulf countries to offset budget deficits by raising funds through issuing domestic debt securities. As market-oriented treasury debt instruments provide a non-inflationary source of deficit financing, it was estimated that Saudi Arabia's domestic public debt — mostly in the form of debt securities — had in the last four years risen from 50 per cent of GDP to 80-85 per cent. It was also estimated that the collective average fiscal deficits of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE widened from 1.5 per cent of GDP in 1981-85 to eight per cent of GDP in 1986-90, while rising to nine per cent of GDP in 1991-95. Moreover, many of these countries are gradually becoming less dependable on oil as their main export and are diversifying their economies by building petrochemical industries, with significant potentials for private sector contribution.

On the other hand, external borrowing is also becoming less obtainable to poorer Arab countries. Foreign direct investment and, to a lesser extent, foreign portfolio investments are instead being viewed as the panacea for the region's deficits in financing requirements, which the World Bank says it is the highest of any developing region.

Indeed, the World Bank and the IMF have been instrumental in pushing for structural and fiscal reforms which aimed at ultimately rendering the region more attractive to foreign investment. Many Arab countries complied and took substantial measures to balance their budgets and current account deficits while simultaneously fostering privatisation and reducing public expenditure.

Since 1985, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia have embarked on programmes of macroeconomics stabilisation and structural reforms. (According to many analysts, the tightening of fiscal policies in these countries led to a "steep" decline in budget deficits, from an average of 14 per cent of GDP in 1981-85 to about five per cent of GDP in 1986-90 and three per cent of GDP in 1991-95. Average inflation decline was also estimated to have fallen from nine per cent in 1981-85 to about six per cent in 1986-95).

Despite the fact that the economies of Syria and Egypt are characterised by pervading public ownership, they too have embarked, since early 1990s, on economic liberalisation programmes.

by substantive attempts to create institutions such as the Middle East Development Bank, capitalised at \$5 billion, with a paid-up capital of \$1.2 billion. Yet, although they may still remain mooted, it is no exaggeration to say that Arab authoritarian economies are gradually giving way to decentralisation and genuine readiness to embrace the role of the private sector. Calls for privatisation are now being made publicly and vociferously in many Arab countries.

For example, the chief of Kuwait Economic Society has called this month for full privatisation of public institutions. In his call, he cited as examples the Kuwait Public Transport Company, the Kuwait Airways Corporation, the Touristic Enterprise Company, and power, water, post, communications, health, and education services which are under the Kuwaiti government control. It has even been reported this month that Oman is conducting a feasibility study to privatise the management of its naval base at Wudam, on the Arabian Sea.

Lastly, probably a very important development with regard to equity and

debt acquisition has taken place in the formerly sensitive area of foreign corporate ownership. Foreign (individual and institutional) investors are now allowed to purchase equities and bonds in some government and many private companies. Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Bahrain (and the expectant Palestinian stock exchange) are among the Arab countries whose national laws allow foreign corporate ownership. However, Arab countries do vary considerably in their latitude and tolerance of foreign corporate ownership. While Oman allows foreign mutual funds to own up to 49 per cent of listed companies, Jordanian legislation, for example, last year scrapped the 49 per cent restriction on equity foreign ownership.

The writer is doctoral law researcher at the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times. In a follow up article Mr. Rimawi will tackle regional securities markets regulations.

LETTERS

Fewer, not more

To the Editor:

A STATEMENT in Francesca Ciriaci's article "Opposition voices objection to current law yet participating in next elections" (Jordan Times, April 29, 1997), quotes Secretary General of the Arab Baath Progressive Party Mahmoud Maayta as having said that Karak and other southern electoral districts were "over-represented". It is a wrong statement since Mr. Maayta, in fact, said that those areas were under-represented.

The Arab Baath Progressive Party,
 Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Featur
 Australian
 tackles s

Arays
 of a my
 cosmic

rades... Most of... anything... Lawph...
ist of our... in trained... ourse we... at the... the Arab... ly, I hope... have the... does not... to do so... from our... how to... e well is...
hances of... negative...
among the... re first in... sities, suc... to write... ade solely...
ability to... diligently... it and take... ons, argue... disagree...
do not do... enthusiastic... of subtle...
ask our stud... of their... to work on... se nothing...
on has taken... merly sense... foreign comp... tip. Foreign... id institutions... are now... arehase some... funds in equ... and many pri... nics. I ght... an. Lebanon... nan. Bahrain... expect...
e among the... tries... allow foreign... ownership... raly continue... nsiderably in... and tolerance... appropriate...
Sanjalay Press... Onan allows... funds to... 9 per cent of... companies... gislation for... last year... 40 per cent... equity...
s development... in the... economy...
of London... the... rlan... p...
tackle...
laci's... article... aw yet...
en. April 29... Arab...
aving said... it was...
Mr. May...
represented...
ressive Party...
Amman...
l contributions...
wish to...
... should...
... address...
... request...
... subject to...
... or the return...

Weekender

Jordan Times, Thursday, May 1, 1997 **A**

Society on the Move

Rewards of helping kids are obvious

It was another relatively motionless week on the domestic front except perhaps for a local paper snafu that did not sit very well with the powers that be. A headline that initially was to read "Study claims government capable of doing away with 13,000 civil service jobs," actually read, "13,000 employees to be pensioned." No manner of defence would succeed, in this situation, to uphold a plea of "fair comment." But a stern warning from His Majesty the King may go a long way in teaching a few editors some journalistic ethics.

PRESSING THE FLESH: Demonstrating his social aplomb, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali played host to diplomats, heads of U.N. missions and international organisations in Jordan Tuesday evening at a reception he threw at the Forte Grand Hotel. The large turnout also gave the guests an opportunity to congratulate the premier on his return to the government and to wish him much success.

NEW RANKS: The Circassian Charity Society has a new board of trustees, uncharacteristically made up of a younger composition of individuals. Traditionally, the 60-something organisation has yielded boards of elder members of the society. Another surprise, to some members, was that the largest number of votes went to a woman independent candidate, Nisreen Shabso, an engineer. The voter turnout was said to be overwhelming with around 9,000 members showing up. The next step will be the election, among the board members themselves, of the officers of the board. We will keep an eye out for any more unexpected happenings there.

POLL WATCH NIGHT: Today the British flock to polling stations throughout the United Kingdom for their general elections. Here in Amman the British Embassy is inviting one and all to come to the British Embassy Club (behind the embassy in Abdoun) to watch the votes roll in on live television starting at midnight local time. Hot soup, rolls, coffee and tea will be offered free of charge, and an English breakfast will be served between 5:00 and 6:00 a.m. on Friday morning. (Reminds one of the U.S. embassy election watch night held last November at Champions in the Marriott Hotel).

A LABOUR OF LOVE: "The Restoration of the Umayyad Palace in Amman," a lecture in English, will be presented by Ignacio Arce, a Spanish architect who has been in Jordan working as director of works on the restoration project on Amman's Citadel mountain. The lecture will be conducted at the Instituto Cervantes in Amman on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. Incidentally, the Instituto Cervantes may not get its own director for another year. Since last year's departure of Camino de Aristegui, the centre's activities have come under the eye of Director-Coordinator for Lebanon, Syria and Jordan Javier Ruiz Serra. Mr. Serra was in Amman this week to join his associates in welcoming Spanish Ambassador-designate Eudaldo (Lalo) Mirapeix

and his wife Bettina to Jordan. His schedule brings him to Amman monthly for about three days. Mr. Serra served from Beirut, then was moved to Damascus. It is yet possible that he may work the three countries from Amman, provided the institute's senior officials maintain the status quo.

HEARING GOOD NEWS:

From Washington we heard news, ahead of his parents, that 3-year-old Firas Ameen Abu Al Hawa from Amman has received a Parent-Infant Financial Aid Award from the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf. The Bell Association gives awards to help Deaf or hard-of-hearing infants succeed in oral education from an early age. Firas's parents, Ameen Hashem and Shahrozad Abu Al Hawa, say they will use the award for their son's education at the Queen Alia Centre for Speech and Hearing Disabilities, which assists around 4,000 children and adults every year. Firas has been at the centre on an assistance programme sponsored by the Ministry of Social Development since 1995. To apply for a Bell award, children must be no more than 6 years of age and must have moderate-to-profound hearing losses (greater than 55db) in the speech frequencies of 500, 1000, and 2000 Hz. The parent/guardian of the child must be committed to an auditory-oral philosophy of education and must demonstrate financial need. This year 214 children were selected to receive awards. Applications are mailed upon request beginning in August. The request deadline is September 15th, and the completed application materials must be postmarked by October 15. To request an application for the 1998 Parent-Infant Financial Aid award, contact Veronica Bounté at: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, 3417 Volta Place, N.W., Washington, DC 20007-2778. The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, founded in 1890 by the inventor of the telephone, is an international organisation dedicated to improving opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to learn to speak, speech-read, and use their residual hearing to communicate and succeed in the normally hearing world.

Firas Ameen Abu Al Hawa

FOR DEVOTION: A different sort of award has been presented to Rose Lohrmann for "her outstanding and

devoted services to the Theodore Schneller School in Amman. The German Merit Medal of the First Order was conferred upon Mr. Lohrmann by President of the Federal Republic of Germany Dr. Roman Herzog. For the better part of three decades Mrs. Lohrmann has been a teacher of German, and has been deputy director of the school. The Schneller School is sponsored by the German Church missionary in Ludwigsberg near Stuttgart. It enrolls orphaned and underprivileged boys who live in the Schneller compound and are educated in vocational training. The graduates are usually immediately hired by local firms for their skills, and those who excel often receive Schneller School scholarships to study at university. The school was started in Jerusalem more than a century ago, but following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, it was moved to Amman. Mrs. Lohrmann received her medal from German Ambassador to Jordan Peter Mende at a special celebration at the embassy. Those who know her, also know that Mrs. Lohrmann not only saw hundreds of youth through their schooling at Schneller, she never forgets them either.

FINE FEATHERS: Ostrich breeding is catching on in Jordan. Since 1983 the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature has not had any luck in its ostrich captive breeding programme. Enter a low-profile local entrepreneur, whose masters thesis centred on the feasibility of raising ostriches for commercial purposes. This young businessman is testing a pilot project on the non-endangered Black Neck Ostrich as a source of leather and meat for export. His contribution to the RSCN project was to help the society with the egg-incubation and chick-feeding process. Today the RSCN has eight healthy chicks which the project managers will transfer to the Shauamari Wildlife Reserve where the chicks' parents are. The RSCN is working on raising Red Neck and Blue Neck ostriches for its educational and captive-breeding projects. It also intends to sell the non-fertilised eggs of the Blue Neck Ostrich as it, unlike the Red Neck, does not fall under the Convention on International Trading of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The society's large captive-breeding programme at Shauamari strives to reintroduce several of Jordan's indigenous animals into their natural habitat.

RAVE REVIEWS: And on ostrich meat, we can tell you that ostrich steaks were served as main course at the South African Embassy's Freedom Day dinner Tuesday evening at the InterContinental Hotel. The guests this year reached around 500 in number, far surpassing last year's crowd of 350. Famed jazz pianist Dr. Ibrahim Abdullah flew in in the nick of time, all the way from New York, to play his non-interrupted repertoire. Dr. Abdullah will play to audiences in Ramallah and Tunis while he is in the region. Guests of honour seated at Ambassador Henry de Bryn and his wife Sophia's table were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Raad Bin Zeid and Princess Majda, and Minister of Tourism Akel Bilaji and his wife Dr. Nowaz Fariz. There was a no-call, no-show from a minister who will go unmentioned here. As one embassy staff put it "There are of course any number of good reasons for being unable to make it at the last minute, but a call would have been appreciated."



Schneller School Deputy Director Rose Lohrmann receives the German Merit Medal from German Ambassador Peter Mende

QUEENS DAY: Crowds once again brushed aside the inconveniences of Jabbal Amman detours last night to attend the official birthday celebrations for Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands at the InterContinental Hotel. At a reception hosted by Ambassador and Mrs. B.F. Tangleder, ministers, government officials, diplomats and businesspersons with Dutch concerns met and mingled with their hosts, a quiet couple with excellent road manners, and other guests. April 30th is known as Queen's Day in the Netherlands, and it commemorates the 1980 investiture of Queen Beatrix and the birthday of former Queen Juliana.

BUSINESS ENGLISH IS BUSINESS: "A good command of the English language is a necessary skill in today's business environment rather than a luxury for the elite few." That is what the proprietor of a new commercial endeavour in Amman called the Business Language Center (BLC) believes. The person behind the project is Hana Darwazeh Ramadan who said that she approached several universities abroad with her concept for the language centre, and the one to show the most interest was San Diego State University. The university's American Language Institute (ALI) is reputed for its teaching of English as a second language. Ms. Darwazeh-Ramadan has been working on pulling her project together for two years. The agreement with the ALI provides ALI-supplied materials and training of the language centre's teachers. Obtaining licensing for her venture was a particular effort, but the centre is "all legal" now, and assessment and placement of students will start in mid-May, with classes beginning in June. The centre will offer four courses at first, each handling 25 students. It is located opposite the Amra Hotel entrance.

Jennifer Hamarneh

Spotlight on Kabardian

Kabardian-English Dictionary
By Amjad M. Jaimoukha

SANJALAY PRESS has just made its debut by releasing its first published work, a Kabardian-English dictionary prepared by Amjad M. Jaimoukha, a British-educated Jordanian electronic engineer, with the assistance of Nadia M. Biescha, an English language teacher. The lexicon is, to some extent, based on the Kabardian-Russian Dictionary, edited by Bubba M. Kardan, with four other principal sources in addition to extensive field work with native speakers. The dictionary is of literary Kabardian and comprises about 21,000 entries, arranged alphabetically in accordance with literary convention. It is the first comprehensive Kabardian-English lexicon, and it includes many idiomatic and figurative phrases, sayings, proverbs and common expressions, which make for enjoyable reading and shed light on the intricacies and subtleties of a language steeped in ancient tradition. To help non-native speakers, the phonetic spelling and stress pattern are indicated where appropriate, i.e., when the general rules of stress, explained in the introduction are contravened. This work is invaluable for the student of Kabardian who is adept at using the English language, for non-Russian-speaking academics and researchers whose main sources of Kabardian would otherwise be in Russian and Kabardian,

for people already proficient in Kabardian who will uncover a "common stock" treasure trove, and for the curious and adventurous who will embark on a fascinating odyssey of self-discovery that will take them to the very depth of their collective soul of the Circassian language and people. Kabardian is the official and literary language of two Circassian republics, namely, Kabarda and Tcherkessia, and it is spoken by about 700,000 people in the Caucasus, making it the most wide-spread Circassian language. It is closely related to Western Circassian, or Adighey, which is spoken by about 200,000 people in the Caucasus, mainly in the Adighey Republic, and to the Shapsigh language used in a narrow littoral of the Black Sea by about 15,000 people. Circassian is also spoken by an indefinite number in the "Diaspora," descendants of the emigrants of the nineteenth century, who were expelled by the Russians following their victory in the Russo-Circassian War. Most of these people live in Turkey, where estimates of their number vary between one and four million. Considerable numbers also live in Syria and Jordan, where no census figures are available of their numbers. The linguistic status of the Jordanian Circassians is precarious, and it is characterised by rapid assimilation, although renewed interest in the mother tongue is shown by the younger generation, which feels somewhat insecure about its ethnic identity. It is one of the most striking anomalies of the Circassian community in Jordan, whose cultural freedom is guaranteed by the constitution and respected by government and society, and that is able to maintain cul-

tural exchanges with the Caucasus with ease. It was perhaps this liberal attitude that precipitated acculturation, in the absence of strong cultural institutions that could preserve the Circassian ancestral heritage. There is an evident lack of interest among Circassian intellectuals in establishing a conduit for cultural preservation, owing to morbid apathy and a moribund spirit. One can almost feel a certain slighting hubris directed at many aspects of the parent civilisation. Circassian lore is readily associated by outsiders, and even by some Circassians, with dancing which, although of some social importance, is in no way indicative of the richness of the culture that goes back for millennia. The cultural renaissance that gripped the Caucasus after the demise of communism has so far largely escaped Circassians in the diaspora, whose traditional leadership only pay lip service to cultural revival, as is attested by their election manifestos. Some of the more motivated Circassians argue that traditional social leaderships have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, to the detriment of the community as a whole. For instance, it may be quite telling that no Circassian institutions have made any contributions to this dictionary, most of the financial backing for which came from one perspicacious individual, Mr. Bassam S. Khurma.

Ali Kassay

BOOK REVIEW

KABARDIAN - ENGLISH DICTIONARY

BEING A LITERARY LEXICON OF EAST CIRCASSIAN

PREPARED BY

AMJAD M. JAIMOUKHA

FIRST EDITION

SANJALAY PRESS, AMMAN

Country music rallies to challenge of alternative country, sales dip

By Jim Patterson
The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tennessee — Something wonderful has happened to the country-music industry: Sales have slipped. Record-company bean counters aren't happy, but music fans could end up big winners when they hear the exciting new music coming their way in 1997. Talent executives who've been playing it safe for years with young (and sometimes forgettable) clones of George Strait, Garth Brooks and Reba McEntire are taking some chances. There are even signs that radio programmers, notorious for their conservatism, may be willing to give edgier, unique artists a chance. "It seems like most of the labels are kind of looking for someone different," said Jim Lauderdale, a talented and veteran songwriter who is recording a new CD for RCA records. "You know their token different acts," he said. "In the rocky event that one of them catches on, they want to be there ready." Lauderdale recorded Planet Of Love for reissue in 1991. It was an influential failure, with eight of its 10 songs subsequently recorded by others. A hard-country album he

recorded for Sony was shelved, and a pop deal with Atlantic didn't work out either. The industry verdict: Lauderdale was too left-of-centre. He moved to minor-league upstart records for "persimmons" last year. That album was embraced in the alternative country market, a niche of country-rock bands who are finding an audience without Nashville's help. "I do think there's a really strong, solid dislike for most of the mainstream stuff coming out of Nashville these days," said Peter Blackstock, editor of No Depression magazine, which covers alternative country music. "Most of the acts that are on the top of the charts are not artists who most of our readership considers very creative musically." Of course, millions of mainstream country fans disagree. Country music quadrupled its sales from 1988-95, in the wake of Garth Brooks' rise to superstardom. But sales slipped by 10 per cent to 12 per cent in 1996, according to the Recording Industry Association of America. That's enough of a dip for executives such as Joe Galante at RCA Nashville to take stock. Galante is betting on break-the-mold artists like Lauderdale, Sara Evans, Ray Vega, and the reinvigorated Kentucky Headhunters to spark some enthusiasm in listeners, and maybe even win over some of

those No Depression readers. "I think we have become so focused on the song and not on the singer that we forget that anybody can sing the song but not everybody is a star," Galante said. "We have gotten in a situation where we can have a song and it can sell a bunch of records and then we mistake that for being a star and this format only grows when it has lots of bright stars." "If Reba McEntire gets up on stage she can sing for 42 days, Alabama can do the same thing. ... Then you come across other people and you go Billy Ray Cyrus, Achy Breaky Heart and that's it. He has done well in this business, but standing the test of time is what we're supposed to be paid for." Country music deejays were cautiously supportive of alternative country at a recent Nashville convention. If they follow through, any of the RCA acts could break through in 1997. Other labels are also trying to launch unique artists on the airwaves, such as gritty singers Jack Ingram (Rising Tide), Bob Woodruff (Imprint), and Neal Coby (Mercury). Any of the three could become the John Mellencamp of country music if they start scoring hits. The group big house (MCA) puts an insistent R and B backbeat on most of its songs, and has flirted with the label

"Funky." Sara Evans, a former prodigy from Missouri, has a stunning debut ready. Three Chords And The Truth, heavily influenced by Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn, will be released in May. The Kentucky Headhunters are trying now to get airplay for their rocking remake of Marty Robbins' Singin' The Blues. Ray Vega has had a fine CD in the dramatic Roy Orbison-Gene Pitney tradition out since last year, but has yet to score a hit. Kim Richey, who co-wrote the Trisha Yearwood hit Believe Me Baby (I Lied) has just released a great second CD out on Mercury. Lauderdale promises a Bakersfield-Buck Owens sound for his upcoming RCA CD. Will any of them break through and make country music interesting again? "Whoever would have predicted 20 years ago that country music would be as huge as it is now?" Lauderdale said. "Who would've predicted that there would be country bands that would be huge?" "And then who would have predicted a few years ago that women in country music would've taken off, because in the past ... they were at the bottom of the totem pole and now they're kind of leading the pack. "We'll just have to see."

For better or for worse?

By Jean-Claude Elias

WHEN LARGE, mainframe computers started to be widely used in the late sixties and the early seventies, the opportunities for the young to study a new promising field became obvious. Computer science, computer engineering, programming, data entry, data analysis, computer operating and other computer-related topics widened the horizons of all those who were looking for fresh ideas to start a professional career.

Indeed, many were those who benefited from the new opportunity. It seemed then like a magic cure against emerging unemployment. Alas the euphoria didn't last long. Two elements came that suddenly turned hope into disappointment. The number of young people who decided to study a computer-related subject grew so much, so fast that the system generated its own unemployment. Simply, there were too many computer graduates. Fortunately this negative phenomenon was soon reversed by the arrival of personal computers in the mid-eighties. Contrary to mainframe machines that were only used in large organisations and were therefore somewhat limited in number, PCs started to invade every office and every home. Computer professionals became so much in demand that even now, in any country, there is not enough of them.

Sadly the second negative element hasn't yet been removed. Actually it is a rather controversial point that is still often debated. We all know that computers do not only allow us to perform better and faster, they also let us do the work with fewer people. This aspect perhaps is more evident in the case of the manufacturing process where a few machines do the job of tens or sometimes hundreds of workers. But even in offices, a powerful, well configured PC can replace several employees be it for straightforward typing or other administrative tasks like

chip talk



accounting, stock keeping and so forth.

Some say that the information technology (IT) industry is creating more jobs than it is suppressing. It could be true but there are no significant figures available to confirm or deny this assertion. Such statistics are too complex to define and to obtain, in all subjectivity. For example can we say that the job of a secretary working in a computer firm is generated by the IT industry? Probably yes, but it is not a computer work in itself.

What is certain is that debating the issue has now become useless. All over the world, whether in developed or in developing countries, the need for IT is something nobody thinks of arguing about. For instance, Syria recently has decided to completely exempt all IT equipment from customs duties, a move aimed at promoting the use of PCs in the country. In Jordan such taxes remain within acceptable limits.

Everything seems to indicate that one way or another, for better or for worse we are bound to IT for the foreseeable future. Problems that apparently derive from the technology must be tackled and solved separately in a way that does not compromise the advancement of computer science and technology.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, May 1, 1997

2:00 The Holy Koran
2:05 Ovide & The Gang
2:30 Raw Toonage
2:45 Curiosity Show
3:10 They Came From Other Space
4:00 N.B.A. Basketball
5:00 Out Of This World
5:30 French Programmes
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 French Programme
7:30 News headlines
7:35 Parenthood
8:00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30 The American Chart Show
9:10 Kung Fu — The Legend Continues
10:00 News In English
10:25 Feature Film
12:00 Taratata

7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
8:00 World Echo (Doc.)
8:30 Side Effects
9:10 Nautilus (Doc.)
10:00 News In English
10:25 One West Walkiki
11:15 Sisters

Monday, May 5, 1997

3:30 The Holy Koran
3:35 French Cartoon
4:00 The German Scene (Documentary)
4:25 Deep Water Haven
4:25 The Ocean Girl
5:00 Extra Dimensions
6:00 French Programmes
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 French Programme
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 One foot in The Grave
8:00 Discover Magazine (Documentary)
8:30 Murder She Wrote (Drama)
9:10 Highlander
10:00 News In English
10:25 Under Suspicion
11:15 Middle March

Tuesday, May 6, 1997

3:30 Holy Koran
3:35 French Cartoon
4:00 Super Sport Follies
4:30 Dog House
5:00 Preserving For The Taste Of It (Doc.)
5:15 The Album Show
6:00 French Programmes
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Tilt 23.5
8:00 Encounter
9:10 Nature Of Things
10:00 News In English
10:25 Snowy River
11:15 Mission Impossible

Wednesday, May 7, 1997

3:30 Holy Koran
3:35 French Cartoon
4:00 America's Funniest People
4:25 Spell Binder (New)
4:50 Challenge (Doc.)
5:30 Bordertown
6:00 French Programmes
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Grace Under Fire (Doc.)
8:00 World War II
8:30 Challenges
9:10 Spenser For Hire
10:00 News In English
10:25 Cobra
11:15 Hart To Hart

Friday, May 2, 1997

2:00 The Holy Koran
2:05 The Mask
2:30 Flintstones
3:00 Cartooning
3:15 French Programme
4:00 Winners Down Under
5:00 Documentary
5:30 French Programmes
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 French Programme
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 America's Funniest Home Videos
8:00 The Health Show
8:30 Hawkeye
9:10 Power Of Dreams (Doc.)
10:00 News In English
10:25 Best Seller — Thorn Birds

Saturday, May 3, 1997

3:30 The Holy Koran
3:35 French Programmes
4:00 Gillette (Sports)
4:30 Innovation (Doc.)
5:00 Blue Heelers
6:00 French Programmes
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 French Programme
7:30 News Headlines
7:35 Hanging' with Mr. Cooper
8:00 Magazine Zero One
8:30 Prism (Local Talk Show)
9:00 Tilt 23.5
9:30 News In English
9:55 Eurovision Song Contest (Live From Dublin)

Sunday, May 4, 1997

3:30 The Holy Koran
3:35 French + Cartoon
4:00 The Global Family (Doc.)
4:25 Energy Express
4:50 Documentary
6:00 French Programmes
7:00 Le Journal
7:15 French Programme

Once again... spin doctors, needs and planet geek

By Samer Ghaleb Bagaeen

THE SPIN doctors have spoken again.

They have said that no changes will be made to the electoral law.

They have said that elections will be held on time.

They have said that practical steps will be taken to encourage local and foreign investment.

They have denied that thousands will be made redundant.

They have said that Jordan has taken part in a recent conference on the rights of the author in celebration of the International Day of Writers.

They have said that the preparatory committee for World Traffic Day had recently met. Sub-committees were formed to manage the delegated responsibilities.

They have said that coordination is required between charitable organisations and voluntary ones for the good of the community.

They have said that the union of traders in foodstuffs had suggested that Amman hold its own promotional shopping month.

They have said that you should beware of imitation.

They have said that the rights of refugees have to be respected.

They have said that no one had ever made any promises that life was going to get better for Jordanians in this era of peace.

They have said that our naive assumptions — because we are all ignorant and ungrateful citizens — about prosperity were totally unjustified.

They said that they will help us go about achieving all that we had hoped to achieve.

They have said that they will help ease our pain and care for our needs.

They have since said that we should ignore our needs and just be content with whatever life has to offer.

Moreover, they now say that we must have no needs whatsoever.

But in our day and age, even computers have needs. They need to be set up. Their software needs to be installed. They need to be configured, reconfigured, upgraded and reconfigured again at increasingly short intervals.



They always seem to need extra RAM, faster processors and bigger hard drives. They need to be replaced outright when the price of a new computer falls below the cost of an upgrade. Just like people have become so damn cheap and easily replaceable.

Computers need support lines, help files and support people. People need one another, they need support and they seek companionship.

As computers get cheaper, they wind up on more desks, requiring more support. With time, senior citizens need to be taken care of more than ever.

But computers can be demanding. They need things such as fonts.

Ever spent half a day worrying about, or installing, fonts on a typewriter? Or a pencil? And when people become demanding, do we throw them out like we do an old rag?

Computers have systems that are supposed to fix problems, except when the person who knows how to do this is on holiday this week. Still, there seems to be far more computer experts than welfare workers. Therefore, are the needs of machines more respected and catered for than those of people in our country?

Sadly, it seems that the needs and dreams of people are not important in our country.

Yet, every single person in this country needs someone to look after him if he is to have all kinds of doors and opportunities opened to him. But what happens when such a person cannot be found, do we walk away from our land and from all that we could have been? Or do we face up to the sea of troubles on our own?

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Mohammad A. Shuqair

AMAZING FACTS

• GOLF championship competitions are annually held in America starting from a summit 7,000 feet high above the sea level. Players have to pass through mountainous passages, jungles full of snakes and avoidance of desert lands and mine fields found on the mountain.

• IN one of the cities in Wales, Britain, there is a museum completely designed to keep 400 species of dogs.

• SEVENTY-THREE years ago, An American invented a kind of jumping shoes for children just like the shape of locusts supported on steel legs with zippers.

• SHOULD a girl's interior petticoat stretch out of the exterior and is seen unintentionally by others, this indicates that the girl will soon marry though she hasn't known yet.

• A NUMBER of persons suffering from misery and wretchedness might not remember that they once joked at a blind man or let their tongues out laughing at a hunchback.

• AN ELEPHANT has the power of hearing the footsteps of a mouse.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

** Please pass me the receiver.
Naawlinee as'samru'a, min fadlek.

** Will you please give me the telephone number of...
Hal tasmaheen b'ta'e raqam telephone...

** Just a moment, please.
Lahtha, min fadlek.

** The line is engaged.
Al-khatt mash'ghoul.

** There's a constant buzz.
Yoojad taneen mustamirr.

** Wait a few minutes and dial again.
Intasir daqa'iq thumma otob ar-raqam marratan okhra.

** You're through, sir.
Ma'ak al-khatt, ya sayyedi.

** Who's calling, please?
Man allathi yatakallam, min fadlek?

** Do you want to leave a message?
Hal tawadd an tatrok rissalah?

** Yes, thank you.
Na'am, ashkuruk.

** Speak up, I can't hear you clearly.
Irfa sawtak. La astatee an asma'aka bewodooh.

** Sorry, we have been cut off.
Assif, laqa kote'a al-khatt baynana

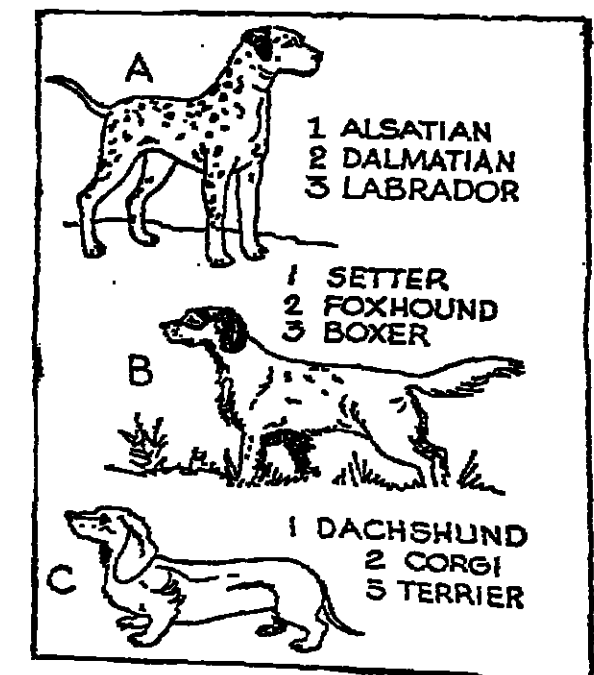
BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Where is the Doomsday Book kept?
2. Give another name for the Northern Lights?
3. What is a topee?
4. What is another name for Ireland?
5. How much does a cricket ball weigh?
6. What is the crockedest railway in the world?
7. What is the longest tunnel in the world?

PUZZLES

(A) Underline the odd-man-out:
• dollop clef crab condemn albino sink
• courage leave measles steamer

(B) Name the breed:
• LOOK carefully at the pictures of the three dogs and try to identify the breed of each dog.



JOKES

• TEACHER: "Which is the largest gold producing area in our country?"
STUDENT: "My mother's safe."

• DOCTOR: "Mrs James, how's your husband now?"
MRS. JAMES: "He's much better now."
DOCTOR: "Where's he?"
MRS. JAMES: "He died this morning."

• HOUSEWIFE: "I've told you, I don't want a dictionary. I already have one."
SALESMAN: "But I don't see it anywhere on your bookshelf!"

HOUSEWIFE: "It's there on that table."
SALESMAN: "Oh, lady, you can't fool me. It's the Bible!"

HOUSEWIFE: "With astonishment!" "How do you know?"

SALESMAN: "By the dust on it."

Gays, lesbians set to fete coming out of TV's Ellen

By Katherine Roth
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK—The invitations are out and so, no doubt, are a lot of the revelers. At least 30,000 invitations have been mailed around the country, and as far away as Finland and Japan, urging people to "come out" in celebration of Wednesday night's episode of Ellen, in which the title character of the TV comedy reveals she's a lesbian.

"If Ellen Morgan can come out to the world ... you can come out to your family, friends and coworkers," says one of a variety of bids sent out for a multitude of parties.

Among the festivities are a midnight costume party at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, home of a Harvard theatre student and a fundraiser thrown by a financial adviser in Manhattan.

While many gays and lesbians say the "coming out" episode is a milestone in their efforts for equal rights, others bristle at the heavy promotion and commercialism of the event.

In San Francisco's Castro district, a number of parties

with the pointedly alternative theme "Come out with Allen" will honour Allen Ginsberg, the gay poet who died earlier this month — "a true cultural warrior," says longtime gay activist Robert Bray.

San Franciscans have been spotted in T-shirts with the last name of the ABC show's star, Ellen Degeneres, crossed out and replaced with "Ginsberg." Pink-and-black bumper stickers in the Castro read "Ellen — come out already."

Degeneres did just that, of course, in prominent magazine and television interviews prior to the show in which her character, Ellen Morgan, announces to her therapist she's attracted to women.

The general reaction from gays and lesbians to the coming out of both Ellens — from towns in the midwest to such centres of gay life as the Castro and New York's Greenwich Village — has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

"This is a very big deal for us," said Sky Johnson, media director for the Gay and Lesbian Cultural Centre in Los Angeles.

"There's a shelter here filled with gay and lesbian youths who were kicked out of their homes. ... To many people, this is going to be hugely important."

In Los Angeles, GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) was struggling to keep up with demand for its "come out with Ellen" party kits, which include invitations, a poster of Degeneres, information about gay rights and a letter from Chastity Bono — GLAAD's media director and the daughter of Sonny Bono, now a Republican congressman, and Cher, the singer and actress.

"I've sent out more than 1,500 coming-out kits already to all 50 states and to five foreign countries," said Don Romesburg, a GLAAD spokesman in San Francisco.

"At first I thought I'd just have a few friends over for the occasion. I didn't realise how in vogue the whole thing would get," said Kathy Bresnan, 32, a financial adviser at American Express in New York.

She's invited a dozen or so guests, each of whom has been asked to contribute at

least \$10 to GLAAD. And she hopes one particular guest will use the occasion to come out as a lesbian herself that night.

Like Bresnan's party, many of the gatherings are intended as fund-raisers, but groups would not estimate how much they expect to raise.

"The scope of this is much bigger than anything we've ever tried before," said Kim Mills, spokeswoman for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C., which has distributed more than 2,600 of its own Ellen party kits.

The biggest parties are planned for Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington and New York, but they're ready to celebrate in the heartland, too.

"Lots of people are having Ellen parties, and the campus is also sponsoring something," said Jeff Krotz, president of the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Centre at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

What has soured some gay Americans on the episode and its attendant hoopla is the sudden fascination with gay issues in the main-



Actress Ellen Degeneres (left) portrays Ellen Morgan as she makes a rather personal revelation to new acquaintance, Susan who is Ellen's new love interest, played by Laura Dern on an hour-long episode of Ellen on the ABC network. In this episode Ellen Morgan becomes the first gay lead title character in a primetime television series (Reuters photo)

stream media, prompted by the life of a fictional TV character.

"I'm alarmed at how easily manipulated the gay and lesbian community is," said

Bray, the San Francisco activist, who is giving an alternative "Allen Ginsberg

— Howl" party. "Consumerism is not a replacement for liberation," Bray said.

'Girl power' puts Spice Girls on record

By Nicholas Winning
Reuters

LONDON — They are multi-millionaires, take former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as their role model and tell women to buck up and get "girl power."

They are the feisty pop quintet Spice Girls, who have sold almost 10 million copies of their first album.

They are the first group ever to top the British charts with their first four singles, have done the same in 31 countries and even outdid the Beatles by getting their first single Wannabe to number one in the United States.

The 1990s saw the meteoric rise of the "boy band," with Take That leading the way until they split up last year, breaking the hearts of thousands of adoring teenage girls across Europe.

The Spice Girls followed hot on the trail of this manufactured band phenomenon, having to audition for places in the group which blended feminism and catchy tunes. They have already earned \$15 million each, media reports say.

In their first official book Girl Power, Melanie Chisholme, Victoria Adams, Emma Bunton, Melanie Brown, and Gerry Halliwell, said they wanted to become household names.

"The future is female," they say. True to Frank Sinatra's classic song My Way, they are eager to stress they are doing everything their way and it is working a treat.

Spice Girl philosophy in their first single Wannabe, they spell out their philosophy of life.

"Yo I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want/ so tell me what you want, what you really really want... I wanna really really really wanna Zigzag-Ha."

The last word is one of the group's invented private words, Emma said in the book, but the popularity of the song was so great that it prompted British Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke to quote them in a speech about the economy.

"I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want... healthy, sustainable growth," Mr. Clarke told businessmen.

He could well have been banking the girls for their support after they lambasted opposition Labour leader Tony Blair and told the weekly magazine The Spectator that they saw Margaret Thatcher as the original Spice Girl.

When I said Thatcher was the first Spice Girl I wasn't claiming I was a boy... I just admire people with ideals," Geri said in the book.

Rarely a day passes without a Spice Girl appearing in the tabloid press. Geri has had the most exposure af-



The Spice Girls receive their Brit Award at London's Ealls Court in February this year

ter topless photos from her pre-Spice days reappeared. Geri said girl power was simply a matter of taking control of your own destiny

irrespective of your physical attributes.

"I'm an expressive person, very outspoken, I feel like a freedom-fighter trying to give girls the right to express themselves," she said.

Mel C, known as Sporty Spice, said she had girl power because she plays football even though people turn their noses up at it. Victoria said she had it because she had broken off an engagement.

"Girl power is when... you and your mates reply to wolf whistles by shouting 'get your arse out'... You don't wait around for him to call ... You believe in yourself," the girls said.

Mel B said the Spice Girls were not like normal pop stars.

"The pop star life is all about stereotypes and fitting into a bracket and we don't want to do that," she said. "I really think we should do whatever the hell we like in this band."

The big question is one of longevity, with some inevitably feeling their success is a flash in the pop music pan.

But if work rate is anything to go by, the band's 14-hour days, endless globe-trotting and jam-packed daily promotions make them contenders to James Brown's crown as the "hardest working man in show-business."

"Underneath all this make-up, I've got black eyes," said Victoria.

They are set to record their second album and film a Spice Girl movie this summer and they plan to go on a world tour next February.

"In the meantime, you know what to do," they say in unison. "Spice it up big-time."

Spice Girls in hot water over Maori war dance

Wellington (R) — Maori leaders are on the war path after reports that British pop phenomenon the Spice Girls had performed a traditional Maori war dance in jest.

The group infuriated Maori cultural experts by fooling around with the Ka Mate Haka — the version of the dance used by the all black rugby team to intimidate opponents — on a promotional visit to Bali last week.

"It's denigration of a people's culture," Timoti Karetu, of the Maori language commission, told Wellington's Dominion newspaper. "... It is unacceptable."

The Spice Girls tried to imitate the words and actions of the Haka in front of about 100 fans after two New Zealanders offered to show them the war dance, newspapers reported.

But angry Maori leaders said it was not the group's place to attempt the Haka, which is traditionally not allowed to be performed by women.

"It is totally inappropriate," said Haka Expert Joe Harawira. "It is not acceptable in our culture, and especially by girlie pop stars from another culture."

Spice Girls manager Bart Cools told Radio New Zealand that the quintet were on holiday and could not be reached for the next week.

"But I think they will be really upset, because it has never been their intention to upset anybody," Cools said.

However, Maori leaders said the girls were in hot water.

"The Spice Girls are on dangerous territory by rubbing our culture, and worse still, mocking our Haka," another expert on the war dance, Willie Jackson, said.

"It's a bloody disgrace. We're sick of people bastardising our culture, and we have a way of dealing with them."



Geri Halliwell of the Spice Girls, performs in a Union Jack minidress at the Brit Awards, Britain's premier music awards at London's Earl Court in February (Reuters photo)

French cancan girls soldier on at Moulin Rouge

By Francois Raitberger
Reuters

Paris — More than a century on, the girls at the Moulin Rouge are still dancing the cancan, kicking up their legs in defiance at the inroads of more modern forms of entertainment.

The cabaret with its celebrated neon-lit windmill in the Pigalle red-light district of Paris claims to be the last guardian of traditional shows "a la Francaise."

The rival Folies Bergere just 800 metres away succumbed four years ago to the temptation of introducing pop music and high-tech staging into its saucy show.

Le Moulin Rouge, made famous by the paintings of Toulouse Lautrec, soldiers on with its basic fare of topless dancers, exotic costumes and staged extravaganzas.

The current show Formidable, created for the cabaret's 100th anniversary eight years ago, is on its last run. The new one to be launched next year will keep strutting the same array of French songs, bare breasts and ostrich feathers.

"This is the last typically French show," says leading dancer 25-year-old Jacqueline Alcock.

Ironically for such a quintessentially French show, Alcock is British, from Stafford, in the English midlands. And apart from the songs, foie gras and champagne, little else is French at the Moulin Rouge.

Most girls are foreign

The ostrich feathers on the opulent 50,000-Franc (\$10,000) costumes are Australian, like several of the 60 girls.

Only four of the girls are French. The others are from Eastern Europe and northern countries where the required minimum height of 1.75 metres is easier to find.

A live Boa curling around a scantily-clad girl in a scene of a kidnapping from an Arab prince's harem obviously comes from more southerly latitudes and the white horse whisking her away is named Macbeth.

More than two thirds of the spectators, who down 200,000 bottles of champagne a year, are foreigners. Japanese form the largest contingent, with East Europeans and Chinese now arriving in significant numbers.

The rest are from the French provinces, with Parisians a rarity.

In a ritual ballet six days a week, tour buses dump

hundreds of tourists for the two nightly performances: a 750-Franc (\$150) 7 p.m. dinner show and an 11 p.m. 450-Franc (\$90) show with champagne.

They emerge two hours later, loaded with Moulin Rouge memorabilia — lighters, watches, caps, and T-shirts.

Those who walk back to cheaper hotels in the steamy district have to run the gauntlet of doormen attempting to lure them into the leather-and-lace atmosphere of sex shops, strip-tease shows, and lurid live sex performances.

Besides glitz and bare flesh, history is the Moulin Rouge's asset. Company executives like to recall that the cabaret was a favourite of the Prince of Wales in the 1890s before he became King Edward VII.

The story goes that cancan dancer "La Goulue" (The Glutton), immortalised by Toulouse Lautrec, called to the prince when she spotted him in the audience: "Hey, Wales, you buy the champagne."

The Moulin Rouge has remained a favourite for the British royal family, and the whole company travelled to London in 1981 to perform — breasts covered — for Queen Elizabeth.

Anyone may hire the cabaret for a private performance, at a price: 700,000 francs (\$140,000).

Show mixes history, beauty, extravaganza

The show goes into the cabaret's history and the stars it hosted, evoking Toulouse Lautrec's backstage visits at the turn of the century, and singers including Edith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. Bing Crosby, Liza Minelli and Frank Sinatra.

The extravaganza mixes bare beauty and glittering costumes in scenes of desert adventures involving flying carpets, girl slaves and princesses. Arab warriors and French foreign Legionnaires.

Formidable, which has had an unprecedented run of almost nine years to recoup its 50-million-franc (\$10 million) cost, ends at the new year.

The Moulin Rouge will reopen two months later with a new show which is a closely-guarded secret — except for the first letter of its name: an F. as for all shows since the successful 1963 show, Frou Frou, named after the swishing of petticoats.

Drug alert for dashing tiger caught in a speed trap

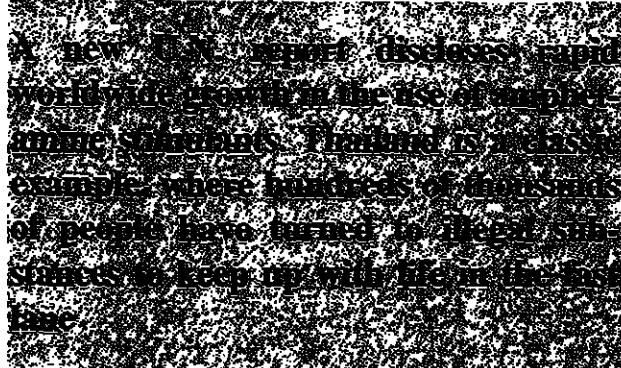
By Ratchada Chitrada

BANGKOK — "Work is money — money is work." This has long been the philosophy of Mana, a young Thai lorry driver. "I have to do as my boss promises to the clients," he says. "And if I do more, I earn more."

There has often been pressure to do more as this "Asian tiger" economy has expanded rapidly in recent years. To keep up with the pace on the long roads of tapering Thailand, many drivers such as 21-year-old Mana have turned to amphetamines — drugs commonly known as "speed."

Thailand is experiencing an explosion in the use of such illegal stimulants. People working long hours take them. The young use them to keep going at dance parties. Stimulants are surging ahead of heroin as the country's biggest drug problem. Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh blames them for increases in violent crime and road accidents.

For seven years, Mana took speed, both in pills and by smoking methamphetamine crystals known as "ice." Now he is trying to kick the habit by undergoing a short course of therapy in a Bangkok drug-treatment centre. After that, he wants to return to his home town, Suphan Buri, to look



for a different type of job. He says it is too easy for long-distance truckers to become dependent on stimulants. After working all day, it helps them to drive on through the night to get a load delivered quickly. The illegal combination of drugs and driving shifts longer than the regulated maximum of eight hours can be deadly.

Many tired, speed-driven drivers have killed themselves and others, including children. A particularly bad accident in Kanchanaburi in early March — in which 20 people died and 13 were injured when a bus and lorry collided — was linked to the use of stimulants.

Amphetamines and related drugs, including the increasingly popular methylene dioxymethamphetamine or "ecstasy," affect the central nervous system and can have serious medical side-effects that can be fatal.

They can also include mood swings. An increasing number of irrational violent attacks have been attributed to the use of speed and particularly ice, which the government recently dubbed the "mad drug."

Officials estimate there are more than a quarter of a million amphetamine abusers in Thailand, and fear that the figure could be 400,000 by the end of 1997. Last year, 30,000 people were arrested for possessing or dealing in stimulants and 24 million doses seized.

Interior Minister Sonth Thienthong believes that up to 300 million baht changes hands every day in the amphetamine trade.

Major-General Viraj Jitmita, of the Police Narcotics Suppression Bureau, points to the huge profits that stimulants can reap for drug barons. "They need to invest very little in these substances. An amphetamine

tablet up in the (illegal laboratories in the) hills costs about three baht to produce. But when it comes down to the users in the town, it sells for 80 or even 120 baht."

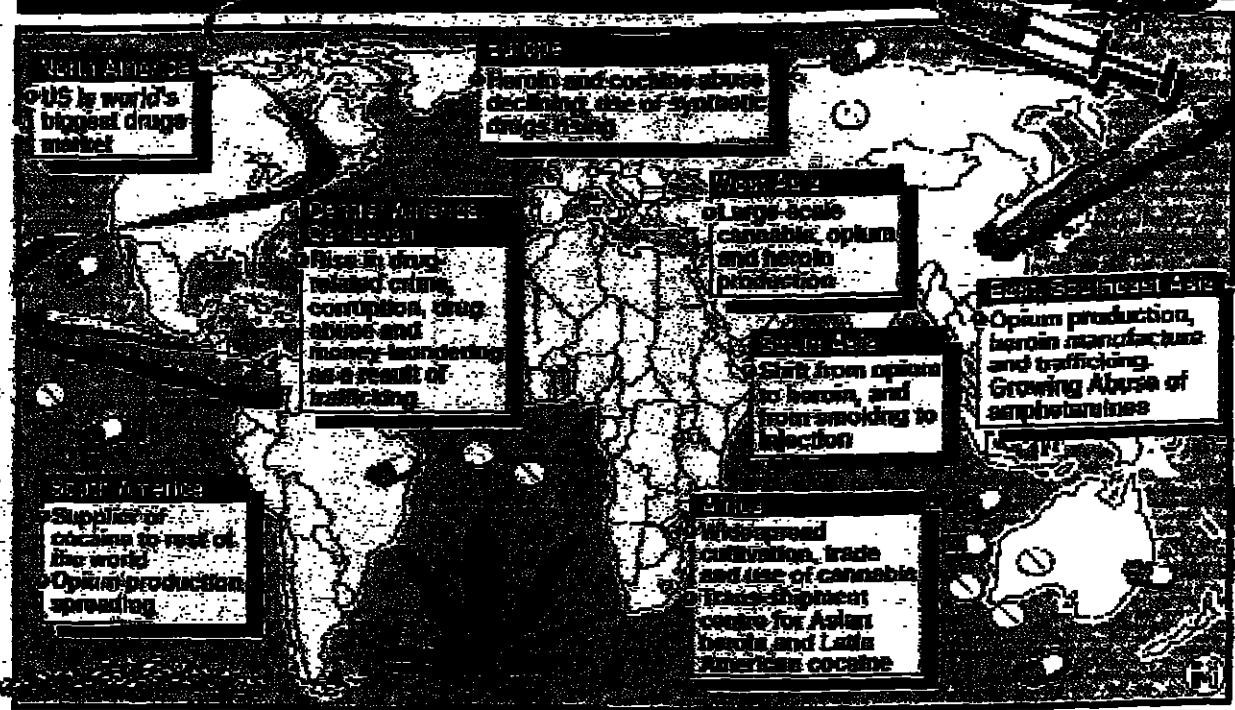
There is evidence of heroin laboratories converting to methamphetamine production, according to the 1997 report by the United Nations-funded International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), published in March. The region's heroin supply suffered a big blow last year with the surrender of Khun Sa, the Myanmar warlord and drug king of the opium-producing area known as the Golden Triangle.

The Vienna-based INCB points to a rapid recent worldwide growth of the abuse of amphetamines, particularly ecstasy.

This hallucinogenic stimulant was introduced to Thailand in the mid-1990s by teenagers from wealthy backgrounds who returned from studies abroad, where they had discovered the "techno" dance craze and its associated drug culture. Ecstasy started selling at 1,500 baht per tablet, but the price has now dropped to around 800 baht or even less, and its use is spreading beyond the rich kids.

Premier Chavalit has vowed to clamp down on

Under the influence



the scourge. In February, he announced a 12-billion-baht, five-year budget to combat drugs. Criminal sentences have already been increased, and amphetamine traffickers can now even face the death sentence.

Launching an anti-drug education campaign in the Klongtoey slums of Bangkok, the Deputy Interior

Minister Chaitin Chalermsak Yoonbunthong pledged: "The government will use every means under the law to fight the drug problem."

However, some people believe the police are going beyond the law. They have been accused of extrajudicial killings of suspected traffickers. Many amphetamine suspects are shot dead

by police, and a parliamentary committee has been investigating one incident in which six men died. The inquiry report is not expected to be made public, but could recommend prosecution of officers.

Another problem in the legal fight against drugs is that some police take bribes from drug lords. Earlier this year, 31 officers in central Thailand were moved amid suspicions of corrupt links to the drugs trade.

Young people have fewer problems with condom use

WASHINGTON (R) — People who start using condoms from a relatively young age have fewer problems with them than those who begin using condoms at a later stage, a new French study said.

The researchers said the findings suggested that promoting condom use among young people for AIDS prevention may also lead to fewer "mechanical" difficulties that could reduce their effectiveness.

"The low risk observed

among experienced condom users below age 25 supports condom promotion to youth," Dr. Antoine Messia and colleagues at France's INSERM wrote in the latest edition of the American Journal of Public Health.

"Low failure rate was correlated with greater experience," they concluded.

The study found that nearly 3 per cent of condom users reported having a problem such as slippage, breakage or "disappearing" the last time they used one.

But people who started using condoms under age 25 reported fewer difficulties than those age 25-34, the authors said. The younger ones used condoms as they started becoming sexually active, and the older ones started using condoms later as co-partners more about AIDS.

The French study was based on a random population sample of more than 4,400 sexually-active adults between the ages of 18-69, who were surveyed between September 1991 to September 1992 — about 700 of whom had used condoms.

Asked about problems, 655 reported they had experienced no mechanical difficulties. Twenty-seven reported that the condoms had burst or torn. 13 said it had "slipped down" or "disappeared" and the rest reported "other problems."

The team reported that "no significant associations were found with characteristics of the coital act," but experience with condoms was a factor in failure.

Studies find brain links to anorexia

By Maggie Fox
Reuters

LONDON — British researchers have said that the brains of young girls with anorexia showed some measurable differences, which could mean there is a biological cause for the distressing illness.

But they warned that the studies were preliminary and that further research, including genetics and hormones, may combine to cause anorexia nervosa.

Bryan Lask and colleagues at London's Great Ormond Street Hospital found 12 anorexics had a reduced blood flow to areas of the brain believed to govern visual self-perception and appetite — the anterior temporal lobes.

Radio. "So when we look at ourselves in the mirror, we really look like what we see."

Anorexics, who can starve to death, often believe they are too fat even when the scales and their thin bodies say otherwise.

Singer Karen Carpenter died of heart failure, possibly on a binge of anorexia, after years of bulimia, a binge-eating disorder.

Dr Lask, who presented his findings to an eating disorders conference at the hospital, said he hoped the findings could translate into a treatment for anorexia, which affects one woman in 5,000 in Britain and is becoming more common in industrialized countries.

We believe the possibility is a genetically determined one. People are born with this predisposition and then other factors come into play around the time of puberty, that's when the condition starts."

Dr Lask said the discovery would help sufferers, who would no longer be regarded as "mad or bad."

"We can say to people with anorexia, 'You're not making it up. You're not your fault. You're not making it up,'" Dr Lask said. "Parents can be helped by saying to them that it's not their fault."

Dr Lask's group conceded its findings could be a result of rather than a cause of anorexia, although Mr. Lask said he did not believe this was the case because, unlike in people who have anorexia, the blood flow did not return to normal once the girls gained weight.

Researchers at Gothenburg University in Sweden made a similar study on 19 young women and two young men with anorexia. Like Dr. Lask's group they used single photon emission computerized tomography to measure blood flow in the brain.

They compared these to scans in nine children who were not anorexic. The teenagers with anorexia showed a "highly significant" reduction in the amount of blood going to the frontal and parietal lobes of the brain — different areas from those targeted by Dr. Lask's group.

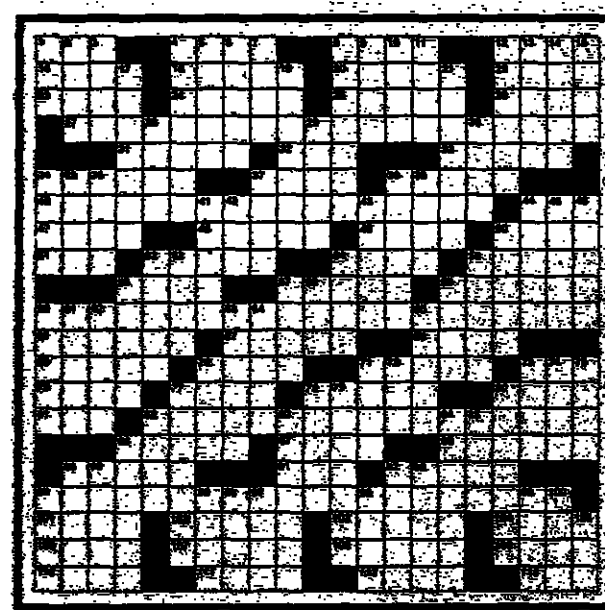
And a group from the Institute for Clinical Radiology at Mannheim in Germany found a "diffuse atrophy" of the brain in 26 anorexic women, and said this could be due to a breakdown in the fatty tissue that protects nerve cells.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

APPROPRIATE PLACES
By Arthur S. Verdesca

- ACROSS
1. Breeze
 2. Lull
 3. Breeze
 4. Breeze
 5. Breeze
 6. Breeze
 7. Breeze
 8. Breeze
 9. Breeze
 10. Breeze
 11. Breeze
 12. Breeze
 13. Breeze
 14. Breeze
 15. Breeze
 16. Breeze
 17. Breeze
 18. Breeze
 19. Breeze
 20. Breeze
 21. Breeze
 22. Breeze
 23. Breeze
 24. Breeze
 25. Breeze
 26. Breeze
 27. Breeze
 28. Breeze
 29. Breeze
 30. Breeze
 31. Breeze
 32. Breeze
 33. Breeze
 34. Breeze
 35. Breeze
 36. Breeze
 37. Breeze
 38. Breeze
 39. Breeze
 40. Breeze
 41. Breeze
 42. Breeze
 43. Breeze
 44. Breeze
 45. Breeze
 46. Breeze
 47. Breeze
 48. Breeze
 49. Breeze
 50. Breeze
 51. Breeze
 52. Breeze
 53. Breeze
 54. Breeze
 55. Breeze
 56. Breeze
 57. Breeze
 58. Breeze
 59. Breeze
 60. Breeze
 61. Breeze
 62. Breeze
 63. Breeze
 64. Breeze
 65. Breeze
 66. Breeze
 67. Breeze
 68. Breeze
 69. Breeze
 70. Breeze
 71. Breeze
 72. Breeze
 73. Breeze
 74. Breeze
 75. Breeze
 76. Breeze
 77. Breeze
 78. Breeze
 79. Breeze
 80. Breeze
 81. Breeze
 82. Breeze
 83. Breeze
 84. Breeze
 85. Breeze
 86. Breeze
 87. Breeze
 88. Breeze
 89. Breeze
 90. Breeze
 91. Breeze
 92. Breeze
 93. Breeze
 94. Breeze
 95. Breeze
 96. Breeze
 97. Breeze
 98. Breeze
 99. Breeze
 100. Breeze

- DOWN
1. Breeze
 2. Lull
 3. Breeze
 4. Breeze
 5. Breeze
 6. Breeze
 7. Breeze
 8. Breeze
 9. Breeze
 10. Breeze
 11. Breeze
 12. Breeze
 13. Breeze
 14. Breeze
 15. Breeze
 16. Breeze
 17. Breeze
 18. Breeze
 19. Breeze
 20. Breeze
 21. Breeze
 22. Breeze
 23. Breeze
 24. Breeze
 25. Breeze
 26. Breeze
 27. Breeze
 28. Breeze
 29. Breeze
 30. Breeze
 31. Breeze
 32. Breeze
 33. Breeze
 34. Breeze
 35. Breeze
 36. Breeze
 37. Breeze
 38. Breeze
 39. Breeze
 40. Breeze
 41. Breeze
 42. Breeze
 43. Breeze
 44. Breeze
 45. Breeze
 46. Breeze
 47. Breeze
 48. Breeze
 49. Breeze
 50. Breeze
 51. Breeze
 52. Breeze
 53. Breeze
 54. Breeze
 55. Breeze
 56. Breeze
 57. Breeze
 58. Breeze
 59. Breeze
 60. Breeze
 61. Breeze
 62. Breeze
 63. Breeze
 64. Breeze
 65. Breeze
 66. Breeze
 67. Breeze
 68. Breeze
 69. Breeze
 70. Breeze
 71. Breeze
 72. Breeze
 73. Breeze
 74. Breeze
 75. Breeze
 76. Breeze
 77. Breeze
 78. Breeze
 79. Breeze
 80. Breeze
 81. Breeze
 82. Breeze
 83. Breeze
 84. Breeze
 85. Breeze
 86. Breeze
 87. Breeze
 88. Breeze
 89. Breeze
 90. Breeze
 91. Breeze
 92. Breeze
 93. Breeze
 94. Breeze
 95. Breeze
 96. Breeze
 97. Breeze
 98. Breeze
 99. Breeze
 100. Breeze

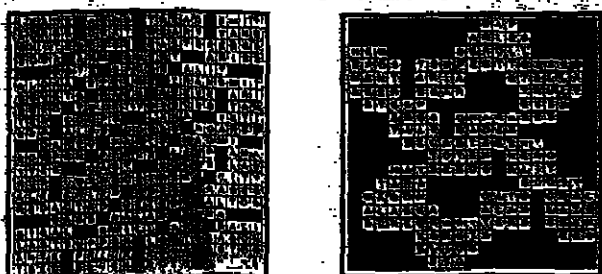


DIAGRAMLESS, 21x21
By Roger Gowers

- ACROSS
1. Breeze
 2. Lull
 3. Breeze
 4. Breeze
 5. Breeze
 6. Breeze
 7. Breeze
 8. Breeze
 9. Breeze
 10. Breeze
 11. Breeze
 12. Breeze
 13. Breeze
 14. Breeze
 15. Breeze
 16. Breeze
 17. Breeze
 18. Breeze
 19. Breeze
 20. Breeze
 21. Breeze
 22. Breeze
 23. Breeze
 24. Breeze
 25. Breeze
 26. Breeze
 27. Breeze
 28. Breeze
 29. Breeze
 30. Breeze
 31. Breeze
 32. Breeze
 33. Breeze
 34. Breeze
 35. Breeze
 36. Breeze
 37. Breeze
 38. Breeze
 39. Breeze
 40. Breeze
 41. Breeze
 42. Breeze
 43. Breeze
 44. Breeze
 45. Breeze
 46. Breeze
 47. Breeze
 48. Breeze
 49. Breeze
 50. Breeze
 51. Breeze
 52. Breeze
 53. Breeze
 54. Breeze
 55. Breeze
 56. Breeze
 57. Breeze
 58. Breeze
 59. Breeze
 60. Breeze
 61. Breeze
 62. Breeze
 63. Breeze
 64. Breeze
 65. Breeze
 66. Breeze
 67. Breeze
 68. Breeze
 69. Breeze
 70. Breeze
 71. Breeze
 72. Breeze
 73. Breeze
 74. Breeze
 75. Breeze
 76. Breeze
 77. Breeze
 78. Breeze
 79. Breeze
 80. Breeze
 81. Breeze
 82. Breeze
 83. Breeze
 84. Breeze
 85. Breeze
 86. Breeze
 87. Breeze
 88. Breeze
 89. Breeze
 90. Breeze
 91. Breeze
 92. Breeze
 93. Breeze
 94. Breeze
 95. Breeze
 96. Breeze
 97. Breeze
 98. Breeze
 99. Breeze
 100. Breeze

- DOWN
1. Breeze
 2. Lull
 3. Breeze
 4. Breeze
 5. Breeze
 6. Breeze
 7. Breeze
 8. Breeze
 9. Breeze
 10. Breeze
 11. Breeze
 12. Breeze
 13. Breeze
 14. Breeze
 15. Breeze
 16. Breeze
 17. Breeze
 18. Breeze
 19. Breeze
 20. Breeze
 21. Breeze
 22. Breeze
 23. Breeze
 24. Breeze
 25. Breeze
 26. Breeze
 27. Breeze
 28. Breeze
 29. Breeze
 30. Breeze
 31. Breeze
 32. Breeze
 33. Breeze
 34. Breeze
 35. Breeze
 36. Breeze
 37. Breeze
 38. Breeze
 39. Breeze
 40. Breeze
 41. Breeze
 42. Breeze
 43. Breeze
 44. Breeze
 45. Breeze
 46. Breeze
 47. Breeze
 48. Breeze
 49. Breeze
 50. Breeze
 51. Breeze
 52. Breeze
 53. Breeze
 54. Breeze
 55. Breeze
 56. Breeze
 57. Breeze
 58. Breeze
 59. Breeze
 60. Breeze
 61. Breeze
 62. Breeze
 63. Breeze
 64. Breeze
 65. Breeze
 66. Breeze
 67. Breeze
 68. Breeze
 69. Breeze
 70. Breeze
 71. Breeze
 72. Breeze
 73. Breeze
 74. Breeze
 75. Breeze
 76. Breeze
 77. Breeze
 78. Breeze
 79. Breeze
 80. Breeze
 81. Breeze
 82. Breeze
 83. Breeze
 84. Breeze
 85. Breeze
 86. Breeze
 87. Breeze
 88. Breeze
 89. Breeze
 90. Breeze
 91. Breeze
 92. Breeze
 93. Breeze
 94. Breeze
 95. Breeze
 96. Breeze
 97. Breeze
 98. Breeze
 99. Breeze
 100. Breeze

SOLUTIONS OF LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE



Studies show pasta, other foods may prevent cancer

SAN DIEGO (R) — A dinner of pasta and tomato sauce topped with green tea and lemon could be a defense against cancer, new research suggests.

Four separate studies presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research here suggest that all those foods have cancer-fighting properties.

In one study, researchers at Harlow Hospital Center, Columbia, University looked at blood concentrations of lycopene, an antioxidant found in tomatoes.

They found smokers with high cancer risk had significantly lower blood lycopene levels.

of lycopene. Even when looking just at smokers, those with the lowest levels of lycopene were four times as likely to get lung cancer as those with the highest concentrations, the study showed.

"We concluded from our findings that low levels of lycopene may be a risk factor for lung cancer, especially for smokers," said principal investigator in the study, Dr. L. J. Gold.

Another study, which was conducted in Italy, examined the effect of green tea on the risk of prostate cancer.

Men who drank green tea regularly had a 50 per cent lower risk of prostate cancer, the study found.

the incidence of intestinal tumours in the rats fed a diet of pasta was 30.8 per cent, compared with 63.2 per cent with those fed a sucrose-concentrated diet, 45.8 per cent with those fed both and 38.8 per cent with those fed alone.

The third study, at the University of Western Ontario in London, found that drinking a compound in citrus fruits, inhibited the proliferation of breast cancer cells. Researchers said the results were not necessarily conclusive but should merit further study into the role of citrus as an anti-cancer agent.

Green tea was added to

the anti-cancer recipe because of past studies showing it protects against oesophageal and stomach cancer, and a new study being released at the conference in San Diego showing it may also protect against skin cancer.

In that study, mice were treated with agents that increase the risk of skin cancer, and then some of them were treated with a topical application of green tea. The tea significantly tempered the increase in skin thickness and growth of lesions. Adding the green tea to the water the mice drank also was found to protect them against sunlight-induced skin damage.

ANSWERS

BANK OF KNOWLEDGE

1. In the basement of the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London.
2. Aurora borealis.
3. A disease which in the 19th century was a nightmare against Britain.
4. Elm.
5. From 5.34 to 5.12, direct.
6. The Mount Tamalpais State Park in California.
7. The Simpson family, 12.18, under long on the road, 12.18, under long on the road, 12.18, under long on the road.

PUZZLES

- (A) Underline the odd-man-out:
- Sink. (In all the other words the last two letters are consecutive letters in the alphabet; not so in 'sink').
- Possible Answers:
1. STEAMER. (The other three words are colloquially connected with three nationalities — Dutch courage, French leave, German measles; steamer is not).
 2. COURAGE. The three other words contain two consecutive letters EA, "courage" doesn't).
- (B) Name the breed:
- A2.
 - B1.
 - C1.

Australian territory tackles smugglers

By Terry Friel
Reuters

DARWIN, Australia — Smugglers have long targeted Australia's rare and exotic wildlife, spiriting animals and birds worth tens of thousands of dollars out of the country in anything from underpants to tape recorders.

Now, wildlife authorities in Australia's rugged frontier province of the Northern Territory plan to test an unusual strategy: making trade in one species of bird legal in a bid to beat the smugglers and safeguard the bird's habitat.

The territory plans to legalise trading in the red-tailed black cockatoo — which is worth up to 20,000 Australian dollars (\$15,800) a pair on the international black market — to fight smuggling, maintain population levels and preserve the bird's habitat.

Bill Freeland, deputy director of the territory's Parks and Wildlife Department, told Reuters the aim of the trial is to encourage farmers to maintain the bird's habitat by making the cockatoo worth money to them, and to put smugglers out of business by opening a tightly-controlled legal trade.

The red-tailed black cockatoo is common in the territory, but near extinction in some other areas of Australia.

"It is one of those species that consistently over the years have been targeted by bird-nappers," Mr. Freeland told Reuters. "These are people with no care or concern for the birds' welfare."

A draft strategy, still the subject of emotional debate in the territory, says the programme will be tied to habitat protection and management.

"The policy promotes financial incentives for landowners to value and actively manage the species and its habitat," says the draft.

Licences to take the birds and eggs will be granted only to landowners, who can then capture the birds themselves

or hire someone to do it for them if they choose.

Some conservation groups strongly oppose the territory government's planned trial, and the territory's Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) says the strategy is flawed.

"While the government argues that placing an economic value on species will ensure their protection by land managers, ALEC argues that placing commercial value on species simply increases the pressure on wild populations to their detriment," centre spokesman George Stewart said.

The director of the Australian Office of the Humane Society International, Michael Kennedy, said that allowing legal trade in animals fuelled demand that led to a fall in population.

"There's no evidence such programmes have any conservation value, not one shred of evidence," Mr. Kennedy said. "Historically, around the world, utilisation has resulted in a decline of thousands and thousands of species."

Legal trade also allowed smugglers to disguise their operations, said Mr. Kennedy, who is also a member of Environment Minister Robert Hill's Biological Diversity Advisory Council.

Mr. Freeland believes some of the critics are swayed by emotion for the spectacular looking bird and a misunderstanding of its true situation.

"Some people get worked up about animals and think that there's a problem when there isn't," Mr. Freeland said.

"The concern is not so much that the animal is endangered, as the fact that it's a very beautiful bird," he said.

Darwin cockatoo breeder Peter McGrath is a keen supporter of the plan.

"We are not dealing with an endangered species here," Mr. McGrath said. "I believe that conservation starts in the habitat. In the long term, it will ultimately protect the species."

X-rays mark spot of a mysterious cosmic explosion

NEW YORK (AP) — A new satellite may finally give astronomers the means to figure out what is causing the mysterious cosmic explosions that space-based instruments have detected for a quarter century.

Since military satellites first discovered them in the 1960s, scientists have detected more than 2,000 gamma ray bursts. Yet they know almost nothing about why distant spots in the sky suddenly light up with high-energy gamma rays, only to fade to black in a few seconds or minutes.

The main obstacle has been logistical. After a burst lights up the sky, astronomers can't turn the world's most powerful telescopes on the spot fast enough. By the time the telescopes are aligned, whatever made the burst has faded to invisibility.

That all changed Feb. 28, when the Italian-Dutch satellite BeppoSax spotted a gamma ray burst in the constellation Orion.

Within eight hours the satellite had trained its own X-ray telescope on the spot where the gamma rays appeared and saw a fading fireball right where the burst had been. In subsequent weeks, the Hubble space telescope and several powerful ground-based telescopes also set their sights on the spot.

What they saw there looked like a fading fireball in a far-off galaxy, a team of 31 astronomers wrote in the April 17 issue of the journal Nature.

"Now we finally have something we can study," said Gerald Fishman, one of the authors of "The Nature Paper." "It's probably one of the biggest developments to happen in gamma ray burst research in the last 30 years."

BeppoSax will have to catch more gamma ray bursts before it can help figure out where the gamma ray bursts come from and what is making them. But astronomers are optimistic.

Because on April 2 the satellite measured X-rays in the aftermath of yet another burst.

"The next burst which comes up I'm sure will be very well observed," said Bohdan Paczynski, an astrophysicist at Princeton University. "This is really a major breakthrough from BeppoSax."

Launched in 1996, the satellite was designed in part to determine the locations of gamma rays bursts as quickly as possible and notify astronomers on the ground. The satellite simply scans part of the sky for gamma ray bursts, and when it sees one it sends a message to astronomers around the world saying "Look over there."

The authors of "The Nature Paper" responded to BeppoSax on Feb. 28 by turning two telescopes in the Canary Islands on the spot indicated by BeppoSax. The telescopes made out both the fading fireball and a faint blurry object that may be a galaxy, as did the Hubble space telescope and other ground-based instruments.

"We see a fuzzy nebula right next to or adjoining the optical transient, but it's hard to say that it's actually a galaxy," said Mr. Fishman, a research scientist at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Centre.

Though previous satellites have done the same thing as BeppoSax, they have been either too slow or too imprecise to be useful, Mr. Paczynski said. BeppoSax can lead astronomers to gamma ray burst remnants because it combines speed and precision in a single package.

If the gamma ray bursts do come from distant galaxies, as the BeppoSax observation suggests, that invalidates the large number of gamma ray burst theories that require sources within the Milky Way, said Martin Rees, Britain's astronomer royal and a professor at Cambridge University.

But at this stage, it's too early to tell.

"My feeling is we have to wait for another one to be sure," Mr. Rees said.

Azmi Bashara running 'in my own name' for Israeli premiership

By Larry Derfner

A FEW years ago, a provocative idea began filtering into the national debate over Israel's character as a Jewish, democratic state. The notion was that a formally Jewish state was inherently discriminatory against its 900,000 Arab citizens, and that the only way to achieve equality was to transform Israel from the state of the Jewish people into a "state of all its citizens."

A corollary to this idea was that Israeli Arabs should have not only full equality with Israeli Jews, but also "cultural autonomy" — a sort of local version of Black Power — which argues that Israeli Arabs have a fundamentally different, even contradictory, political identity from that of Israeli Jews, and that they should be able to develop that identity freely by, for instance, running their own school system, and radio and TV stations, as they see fit.

The populariser of these ideas was Azmi Bashara, then a professor of philosophy at Bir Zeit University and a fellow at Jerusalem's Van Leer Institute.

Lately, as a first-term Knesset member, he has introduced yet another provocative notion into the national political debate: that an emphatically non-Zionist Israeli Arab is going to run for prime minister of the Jewish state. Bashara has announced his candidacy for the 2000 election.

The first thing a visit to his Knesset office sees — taped to the wall opposite the door — is a photocopy of a painting of Gamal Abdul Nasser. "This is basically a provocation to all sorts of people who come in here," Bashara was quoted as saying in an interview with the Hebrew daily Ha'aretz. Yet he tells this interviewer "The picture is not meant as a provocation against Israel. I want Israelis to respect my heritage as I respect theirs."

Growing up in Nazareth in the 1970s, Bashara says Nasser, with his message of pan-Arab unity, was a hero to him and other Israeli-Arab youths.

Today, he faults Nasser for his "undemocratic" ways, but finds him a serviceable example for Arabs seeking an alternative to the corrupt dictatorships and Islamic fundamentalist movements that dominate the Arab World. Asked if he does not feel torn between being a Knesset member and prominently displaying a picture of Israel's former supreme enemy, Bashara replies: "Israel was also Nasser's enemy. Israel also tried to destroy Nasser and his drive for modernisation. Besides, the war with Egypt is over."

Next to the picture of Nasser is a poster of Mordechai Vanunu, whom Bashara, in his weekly column in Yediot Aharonot, called "the first citizen who linked concern over Israel's future with concern over the future of the region as a whole."

Bashara, 40, is a striking figure, with the look and the air of a defiant, dashing young European intellectual. He spent the mid-1980s getting his doctorate at an East Berlin university, an experience which, he says, soured him for good on the communist beliefs of his youth. He has a modified Zapata moustache and a sweep of thick, black hair, and smokes cigars.

Sitting down for an interview during a break from Knesset meetings, Bashara, wearing a blue-green suit, leans back with relaxed elegance behind his desk, and appears intense nearly all the time.

An unnamed colleague was quoted in the Ha'aretz interview as describing Bashara's political stance as "somewhere between George Habash and Giorgio Armani."

(The most recent media coverage of the MK had nothing to do with his political career. He entered, end of February, Hadassah-University Hospital for a kidney transplant; the donor is his brother, Marwan.)

Bashara knows he is not going to be elected prime minister. He is looking for five to six per cent of the vote — about half the Israeli-Arab vote, plus a decent sprinkling of Jewish ballots — which he figures should be enough to force a runoff election. This would give him the leverage to win "not all, but part" of Israeli-Arab demands from one of the two front-runners. He expects that the likely Labour challenger, MK Ehud Barak, would be more amenable to prime minister — and presumed candidate for reelection — Benjamin Netanyahu.

While he supports the creation of a Palestinian state, Bashara says this would not be one of his demands, as it is a matter for Israel to work out with the Palestinians, not with Israeli Arabs.

While giving the Rabin-Peres government credit for improving the status of Israeli Arabs, and having preferred former Prime Minister Shimon Peres to Netanyahu, Bashara says he cast a blank ballot in the prime minister's race. "I thought there should be some voters saying 'no' to Labour," he explains, so Labour wouldn't be able to take Israeli-Arab support for granted.

Bashara's own prime ministerial candidacy received an early boost about a month ago when Geshet MK Michael Kleiner tried unsuccessfully to nullify it.

Kleiner submitted a bill to the Knesset to bar non-Jews from running for the premiership. He argued that the post was a symbol of the Jewish state and therefore should be reserved for Jews alone. However, the Knesset executive — Speaker Dan Tichon and his seven deputy speakers — has the authority to strike down any bill that is racist, and the executive decided that Kleiner's offering fit that description.

Attorney and former Likud MK Uriel Lynn, who, as chairman of the Law and Constitution Committee, pushed the direct election of the prime minister law through the Knesset, says there is no way to amend the law to prevent an Arab from running for premier. "Such a bill wouldn't pass in the Knesset, and even if it did pass, it wouldn't stand up to a legal challenge under the Knesset's Basic Law: Human Freedom and Dignity, and under the basic democratic principle of equality."

For Bashara, the defeat of Kleiner's bill was "a great victory for Arabs. Political participation of Arabs at the highest level was legitimised." The controversy also gained him a lot of publicity, wide support for the principle of his candidacy — if not necessarily for him as a candidate — and made Bashara a national figure, in the league of any other Israeli-Arab politician.

The Arab political establishment, however, looked on him as an upstart. Bashara founded the National Democratic Union list, which, he says, "was built in the Arab villages, and has the support of a high proportion of the Arab intelligentsia, mainly secular, but also some religious." The new party

joined forces in the election with the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality.

After Bashara declared his candidacy for prime minister, DFPE endorsed the idea of an Arab running, but said the candidate should be chosen by consensus. MK Abdul Wahab Darawshe, head of the Democratic Arab Party, agreed. But Bashara says: "I'm not running in the name of the Arabs, but in my own name. I'm going to go for it; I don't want to bury this idea in a debate of 'why him, why not me?'"

Bashara is incensed by suggestions that an Israeli Arab has divided loyalties and cannot be trusted with the confidential military and intelligence reports a prime minister receives.

"There's a problem with the level of thinking in such people," he says. "They think an Arab cannot be a parliament member without running to the other side and spying. Who says I want to hear the Shin Bet's reports? I am not eager to prove my loyalty in front of racists and say I'm not going to spy, because it's beneath me."

Bashara is not a philosopher-turned-politician. If anything, he is the opposite. Like so many young, polished, Israeli-Jewish politicians, he first learned about public speaking, leading causes and gaining power in high school. In 12th grade, he was elected the first president of the newly formed national Arab student union, and organised demonstrations against the "Zionist" curriculum in Arab schools which glorified the Jewish pioneers in their struggle against sinister Arab marauders. "It was humiliating to Arab students," he says.

Bashara comes from a nonreligious Christian family. His father was a health inspector and union activist, and a communist until the 1950s. Bashara went to Nazareth's Baptist School not for its religious teachings, but because it was the best school academically. He prayed in church with the rest of the students everyday, and while this did not make him religious, it did add a religious kind of headiness to his political beliefs.

"The psychological atmosphere was salvational. There's something millennial about Christianity," he says. "It took me some time to get rid of this" wide-eyed fervour. Although he grew up a Christian in name, Bashara says, "I was a part of Islamic culture. My father made me read the Koran to learn good Arabic. My heroes were Islamic heroes: the Prophet Muhammad, Saladin."

He went to Haifa University to study sociology and psychology, then to Hebrew University to study law, but explains: "I didn't go there to study. I went to organise Arab students." During the clashes at the Hebrew University in the late seventies between Arab and right-wing Jewish students, Bashara says he was "beaten and threatened by hooligans brought from off-campus."

At Humboldt University in East Berlin, Bashara began to develop his political ideology for Israel. Among his influences were the turn-of-the-century "Austro-Marxists" — "mostly Viennese Jews," he notes — who tried to craft a new kind of communism that recognised the importance of democracy and national culture.

He also read Zionist thinkers, including Jabotinsky, and discovered that the movement was not as monolithic or self-consciously domineering as the traditional Arab view made it out to be. "I used to see it as a colonialist movement per se, but in reading Zionist literature I saw that it was more complex, that it looked at itself as a renaissance movement, a movement of liberation, and that it was in tension between its self-image and its practices."

Bashara did not exactly become a Zionist, however. With philosophy professor Sa'idi Za'adani of Bir Zeit University, he published an article in 1989 which first outlined the ideas of cultural autonomy and Israel as a state of all its citizens.

Little by little, the idea made its way into Arab intellectual circles and Jewish left-wing academe. A few years ago, Bashara said that while most Israeli Arabs had not heard of cultural autonomy and might be put off by the term, he felt sure that most of them favoured the specific proposals of the plan, such as Arab-controlled schools and broadcasting, a decisive say in the development of their cities and villages, and possibly even a separate lottery to help fund that development.

At the time, an Israeli-Arab activist with Meretz dismissed the notion, calling it "an idea that may be popular with intellectuals at Bir Zeit but which is irrelevant to Israeli Arabs. Israeli Arabs are mainly concerned with achieving equality, and beyond that with buying an apartment, buying a car, improving their lives." A DFPE MK said: "Nobody wants cultural autonomy. What we want is equal rights."

Yet, during the 1996 election campaign, the head of the Labour Party in the Arab town of Tira said that while he didn't know enough about cultural autonomy to comment on it, he did say: "Of course we should run our own schools. This is a must." Similarly, he wasn't too interested in the high-flown idea of Israel as a state of all its citizens, but insisted that there should be no mention of nationality, either "Jewish", "Arab" or any other, on Israeli ID cards. "It should say 'Israeli citizen' and that's all."

In recent years, many Israeli Arabs have been making the point that they can hardly be equal citizens when their country's anthem mentions Jews alone, and when their country's flag bears the Magen David.

None of this discussion goes down well with Israel's Jewish majority. About two years ago, then-deputy education minister Micha Goldman (Labour), in response to complaints from an Israeli-Arab audience, offered to raise the possibility of amending Haikva to include a reference to all citizens, he was widely denounced by the right-wing opposition and given the silent treatment by his left-wing government colleagues.

Meretz leader MK Yossi Sarid, who fully supports Israeli-Arab equality and Bashara's right to run for prime minister, says there is a "great distance" between Bashara's ideology and his own.

"The Meretz platform supports Israel as a Jewish state and as a state of all its citizens, and there is no contradiction between them," Sarid says. For him, civil equality for Israeli Arabs would solve the national problem within this country.

On the issue of Arab-run schools, he says: "I'm sure that much of the curriculum for Arab students has been stupid and irrelevant to them, and they should study their heritage, but there's a long way between that and a sepa-

rate Arab educational system." Sarid adds that the right-wing uproar over Bashara's candidacy was "just an attempt to start excitement, to throw oil on the fire. The fact is he has no chance of being elected."

And if he did?

"Then Israel would no longer be a Jewish state anyway, because part of the basis of Israel as a Jewish state is that it has a Jewish majority," Sarid argues. The implication is that very few Jews would vote for Bashara, which is probably correct. (Bashara, however, says he aims to get 10,000 Jewish signees among the 50,000 total he needs to place his name on the ballot.)

Bashara points out that his programme "is not for implementation today or tomorrow. It's like a compass for political action. It gives you a direction. You begin to look differently at the questions of education, civil rights, peopledom, development. Until now, for example, 'development' has meant development for Jews through the taking of Arab lands."

"My main programme is a state of all its citizens. Cultural autonomy without that would lead to irreconcilable conflicts. But if cultural autonomy is rooted in a state of all its citizens, it will be a method of integration."

He emphasises that he is against any kind of territorial autonomy for Israeli Arabs, and impatiently dismisses the claim that they will one day seek to split off from Israel in Galilee and the Negev and link up with a Palestinian state. Netanyahu has used this as an argument against a Palestinian state.

"It's nonsense," Bashara says. "He knows it's not true. There can be no territorial autonomy, because the Arab population is dispersed throughout the country."

He also rejects what the PLO used to claim as its goal: a "secular, democratic Palestine."

"A secular, democratic Palestine didn't take into consideration that there was a Jewish nation here with a Hebrew culture as its identity," Bashara says. "This is not only a fact, it is also a nation with the right of self-determination and identity."

What he ultimately wants, then, is cultural autonomy for both Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs, with equal political standing for both. But there are 21 Arab states in the region which are at least unofficially Islamic; shouldn't the Jews have one state of their own?

"I don't agree that there should be Islamic states. I don't think there should be (Arab) dictatorships either," Bashara replies. Is it fair, then, to ask the Jews to jettison the Jewish character of their state before the Arabs do away with the Arab nationalist and Islamic character of theirs? To this Bashara replies, in essence, that while he thinks globally, he can only act locally.

He has to take a break from the interview to go into the Knesset and speak in the debate over the release of Palestinian women prisoners, including those who had killed Israelis. A number of right-wingers were demanding that if the Palestinians were freed, Jewish prisoners who had killed Palestinians also should be freed. Bashara argues that in the context of the Oslo agreements, the Palestinians should be released because they were, in effect, prisoners of war, while the Jews were simple criminals. He has a hard time making himself heard over the catcalls.

"Blood is blood, murder is murder!" the Likud's Ze'ev Boim shouts.

Kleiner, who follows Bashara, says sarcastically: "From (Bashara's) point of view, he's right. Azmi Bashara is in a nationalist struggle, and for him it's as if we're on a different planet. To him perhaps the murder of collaborators is a mitzva."

Bashara is already on his way back to his office and doesn't hear Kleiner's remarks. Asked whether he thought the killing of collaborators was indeed a "mitzva," he replies: "Of course, I don't. (My vociferous Knesset opponents) don't know what I think. They don't want to know what I think. They just want to put on a show."

He mentions a point he didn't raise in the Knesset: that while he opposes the release of Jews convicted of nationalist crimes, he's also against freeing the 69 Israeli Arabs jailed for nationalist crimes. He just wants these prisoners to have the same rights that Jews imprisoned for nationalist crimes receive.

For Bashara, the key difference between the Palestinian prisoners and the Israelis — Jewish and Arab — is that the Palestinians lived under occupation and turned to violence because they were systematically brutalised and had no right to political expression, while the Israelis had this right as citizens of a democratic state.

Asked his view of Palestinian terror, he says: "I was always critical of actions against civilians. I never thought they were justified morally or politically, and I thought that pragmatically, they could only hurt the Palestinian cause."

However, when asked his opinion of Palestinian killings of Israeli soldiers, Bashara pauses for a long time; it is the one time in the interview that he doesn't have an immediate answer. Finally, choosing his words with difficulty, he says: "It's hard for me as a civilian, someone who has political rights, to say anything about the killing of soldiers. You can't come in with such a cruel occupation and tell people they can't struggle against it. I can't be a preacher to people living under occupation. But certainly in international law, and even in the morality (that has evolved) since the European enlightenment, cases similar to the killing of Israeli soldiers by Palestinians were always justified."

Then does he justify such acts?

"I'm never ready to say that the killing of human beings is justified, but you can't refer to killings under occupation and killings in a democratic country in the same way. The situation of occupation is an abnormality. People are oppressed, they don't have political rights, they live under continuous violence."

So finally, was the killing of Israeli soldiers by Palestinians right or wrong?

"Nothing is right about the occupation. I can't say if (the killing of Israeli soldiers) was right or wrong, and I'm not going to condemn (the Palestinians involved), because I think that the occupation was responsible for it." After another pause he adds: "The problem with the so-called 'Palestinian armed struggle' is that sometimes it forgot the goal and (the violence) itself became the goal, a means for factions in the PLO to compete over who could commit the most actions."

The Jerusalem Post Magazine

Syria expands exploration to boost oil reserves

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria has signed three contracts with international companies for oil and gas exploration covering 15,000-square kilometres as part of a policy to expand exploration activities, Oil Minister Mohammad Maher Jamal said Tuesday.

Speaking to Reuters in the first interview with an international news agency since he became minister in a government reshuffle late last year, Mr. Jamal said negotiations were underway with other foreign companies for concessions in other areas.

In addition to the concessions already granted, the state-owned Syrian Petroleum Company (SPC) was also conducting its own exploration activities which included 3D surveys, Mr. Jamal said.

Syria produces around 600,000 barrels per day (bpd) of heavy and light crude oil. It exports around 330,000 bpd.

Mr. Jamal, a geologist who has worked in the oil sector for more than 20 years, said the contracts included one with Royal Dutch/Shell Group and Germany's Veba A.G. unit Deminex. The agreements are expected to be passed by parliament this week.

A second contract was signed earlier with France's Elf Aquitaine, Japan's Sumitomo and Malaysia's Petromas. A third was signed with

Hungary's MOL.

Oil industry sources say that according to an initial geological survey in Syria, over 831 structures were identified as areas with possible deposits of oil. Of these, only 293 were drilled and oil was found in 124 structures.

The sources say that deposits in these areas could be more than double current proven reserves and yield more gas than oil.

Mr. Jamal said the contract with Shell covered 5,000-square kilometres at the Dayr Azzawr area, where most of Syria's oil is produced.

The contract includes a period of four years during which the company should drill four wells and conduct three surveys for 350 square kilometres and spend \$13 million.

The company would be given two extension periods each of two-and-a-half years. During each period two wells should be drilled and \$5 million invested.

Shell and Deminex have been in Syria since the late 1980s and their company Al Furat, which is half owned by SPC, produces most of Syria's light crude oil from the Dayr Azzawr area, some 350 kilometres northeast of Damascus.

Al Furat produces over 400,000 bpd of light crude in addition to 4.5 million cubic metres of associated gas per day.

Elf's contract also covers 5,000-square kilometres and has a period of seven-and-a-half years.

During the period the company should drill seven wells and conduct three surveys over 1,100-square kilometres and spend \$25 million, the minister said.

Elf and SPC currently produce over 60,000 bpd of light crude from the Dayr Azzawr oilfields.

Last month, Syria signed an exploration contract with the Hungarian oil and gas company Magyar Olaj-és Gázipari (MOL) for an area covering 5,000 square kilometres. The company will invest \$23 million over a period of nearly eight years.

Other than oil, Syria will soon start constructing two major gas projects that would raise output to 18.3 million cubic metres a day at a total cost of \$550 million, the oil minister said.

He told Reuters that the winner of a tender issued earlier for construction of a \$300 million gas project would be announced soon.

He said three companies were competing for the project which includes building a gas plant capable of processing 4.3 million cubic metres per day.

Construction would start soon and the project, near Dayr Azzawr city, should be completed by 2000, the minister said.

He said studies were in

progress for constructing a second gas project north of the central region to produce four million cubic metres of gas a day.

The project will cost around \$250 million and construction should begin this year, the minister said.

He said that Syria's current gas production is around 10 million cubic metres a day, part of which is used to feed electricity generation plants.

"Syria has a very big reserve of gas which ensures a good future for the gas industry in the country," the minister said without giving any figures.

Answering a question on plans for construction of an oil refinery by the private sector in Syria, the minister said the government was still discussing the offer and its feasibility.

Oil industry sources said the Sarakbi Group, a private company, had offered to build an oil refinery with a capacity of processing 140,000 barrels a day in accordance with an investment law allowing investors to operate tax-free for the first five years.

There are two oil refineries in Syria now in the cities of Banyas and Homs, each with a capacity of processing 120,000 bpd.

Syria produces around 600,000 bpd of which over 330,000 bpd are exported to the oil market.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7320	0.6966	0.7036	127.04	0.6966	171.300	1.6360	163.60
DE Mark	0.5774	1.0000	0.5353	0.5380	73.54	0.5353	136.36	1.2244	122.44
GB Sterling	1.4222	2.0062	1.0000	0.7876	166.67	0.7876	193.60	1.6667	166.67
CH Franc	0.6966	1.1754	0.6179	1.0000	136.36	0.6179	152.20	1.3636	136.36
JP Yen	0.0079	0.0136	0.0060	0.0073	1.0000	0.0079	163.60	1.6360	163.60
CA Dollar	0.7100	1.2410	0.4411	0.4411	110.00	1.0000	266.67	2.6667	266.67
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0010	0.0004	0.0004	136.36	0.0006	171.300	1.6360	163.60
NL Guilder	0.0132	0.0228	0.0105	0.0105	220.00	0.0132	333.33	3.3333	333.33
FR Franc	0.0171	0.0297	0.0136	0.0136	246.67	0.0171	444.44	4.4444	444.44

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7320	0.6966	0.7036	127.04	0.6966	171.300	1.6360	163.60
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	2.4372	0.5353	0.5380	73.54	0.5353	136.36	1.2244	122.44
GB Sterling	0.2866	0.4980	0.1000	0.1000	16.67	0.1000	40.00	0.4000	40.00
Bahrain Dinar	2.46	4.2480	0.9380	0.9380	116.67	0.9380	233.33	2.3333	233.33
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4740	0.1000	0.1000	16.67	0.1000	40.00	0.4000	40.00
Kuwait Dinar	3.2885	5.7480	1.2388	1.2388	152.20	1.2388	309.09	3.0909	309.09
Emirate Dinar	0.2724	0.4710	0.1000	0.1000	16.67	0.1000	40.00	0.4000	40.00
Lebanese 1000	0.88	1.5280	0.2488	0.2488	30.91	0.2488	62.50	0.6250	62.50
Egyptian	0.2500	0.4375	0.1000	0.1000	16.67	0.1000	40.00	0.4000	40.00

Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit
Brent	1000	18.85	1000	18.85	1000	18.85	1000	18.85	1000
WTI	1000	20.25	1000	20.25	1000	20.25	1000	20.25	1000
Bony	1000	18.85	1000	18.85	1000	18.85	1000	18.85	1000
Dubai	1000	17.75	1000	17.75	1000	17.75	1000	17.75	1000
UL Gas	1000	194.00	1000	194.00	1000	194.00	1000	194.00	1000

Metal Prices									
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit
Gold (oz)	100	330.2	100	330.2	100	330.2	100	330.2	100
Silver (oz)	100	4.88	100	4.88	100	4.88	100	4.88	100
Platinum (oz)	100	370.5	100	370.5	100	370.5	100	370.5	100
AL (3 Months)	100	1645	100	1645	100	1645	100	1645	100
CU (3 Months)	100	2383	100	2383	100	2383	100	2383	100
Zinc (3 Months)	100	1273	100	1273	100	1273	100	1273	100
Lead (3 Months)	100	622	100	622	100	622	100	622	100
Ni (3 Months)	100	7390	100	7390	100	7390	100	7390	100

Main Equity Indices									
Source	Index	Value	Chg	% Chg	Source	Index	Value	Chg	% Chg
New York	DOW JONES	7028.86	67.83	0.97	New York	S&P 500	802.23	8.18	1.03
New York	FTSE 100	4436	2.8	0.06	London	FTSE 100	4436	2.8	0.06
Tokyo	Nikkei 225	19151.12	480.75	2.57	Tokyo	Nikkei 225	19151.12	480.75	2.57
Paris	CAC 40	2839.46	36.5	1.31	Paris	CAC 40	2839.46	36.5	1.31
Frankfurt	DAX	3438.97	64.88	1.91	Frankfurt	DAX	3438.97	64.88	1.91

Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price
Coffee (ciba)	221.7	221.7	Spot	221.7	US Dollar	0.708	0.708	0.708	0.708
Cocoa (Mton)	1453	1453	Spot	1453	GB Sterling	1.5442	1.5442	1.5442	1.5442
Sugar (Mton)	316.7	316.7	Spot	316.7	DE Mark	0.4103	0.4103	0.4103	0.4103
Wheat (Mton)	178	178	Spot	178	CH Franc	0.4828	0.4828	0.4828	0.4828
Soy (ciba)	24.04	24.04	Spot	24.04	FR Franc	0.1216	0.1216	0.1216	0.1216
Tee (ciba)	144	144	Spot	144	JP Yen	0.0079	0.0079	0.0079	0.0079
Barley (Mton)	0	0	Spot	0	NL Guilder	0.0132	0.0132	0.0132	0.0132
Rice (Mton)	480	480	Spot	480	IT Lira	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006

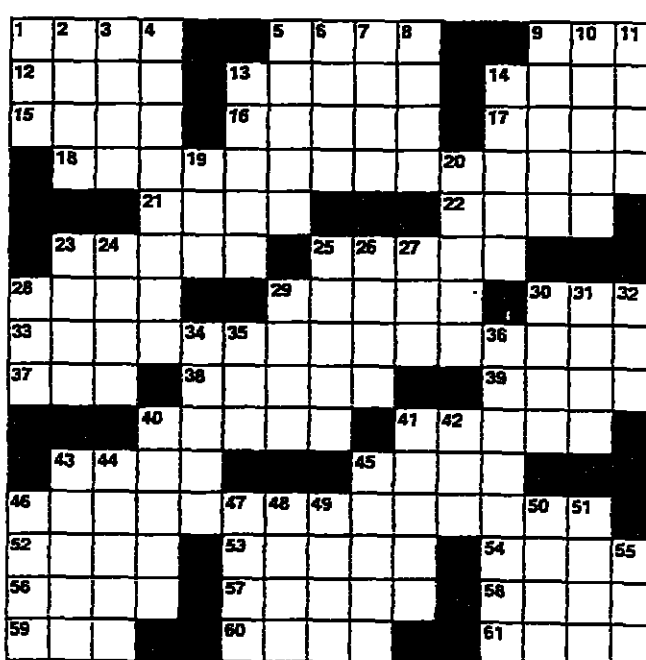
THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Salamanders
- 5 Flaccid flesh
- 9 Anger
- 12 Cookie
- 13 Dwarf of myth
- 14 Sector
- 15 Undercover cop
- 16 Della of song
- 17 Treaty
- 18 Unparalleled shop
- 21 Goes wrong
- 22 Linger
- 23 Chubby one
- 25 Singer Bobby
- 28 Marsh bird
- 29 Alpine region: var.
- 30 — tai
- 33 Superlative musician
- 37 Goller Ernie
- 38 Make — for (run toward)
- 39 Egyptian goddess
- 40 Vestibule
- 41 Musical Andre
- 43 Heroic story
- 45 Boxer's weapon
- 46 Ruddy brow
- 52 Berne's river
- 53 Atelier item
- 54 Journalist and social reformer
- 56 Catcher's glove
- 57 Sod
- 58 Best or Ferber
- 59 Last Spanish queen
- 60 Concerning document
- 61 Ownership

DOWN

- 1 Eternity
- 2 Lady of the Haus
- 3 Coastal bird
- 4 Concerning community life
- 5 Liberates
- 6 German physiologist
- 7 In addition to
- 8 — cheese
- 9 Baghdad resident
- 10 Alter by trimming
- 11 Jackson or Nelligan
- 13 Nova Scotia town
- 14 Of bees
- 19 Alphabet run
- 20 Ribbed cloth
- 22 Poultry
- 23 War god
- 25 Sily
- 26 Principal
- 27 Caviar base
- 28 Helm dir.
- 29 Despot
- 30 Fine rain
- 31 Sale caveat
- 32 — in the bag
- 34 Hawaiian isle
- 35 Time zone letters
- 36 Scattered rubbish
- 40 Heron
- 41 Manipulate
- 42 Bat wood
- 43 Done in
- 44 Major artery
- 45 — Jacques
- 46 Renown
- 47 Mr. Amaz
- 48 Be obsequious
- 49 Glacial ridges
- 50 Adjutant
- 51 Eat well
- 55 Melancholy



by Eugene Puffenberger

04/18/97

Thursday's Puzzle solved:

C	O	H	O	F	A	R	A	D	B	E	L	T
E	I	B	O	N	A	M	A	T	I	A	L	I
L	O	R	E	V	O	T	E	S	L	A	I	V
L	E	S	H	O	R	S	E	G	O	L	L	A
E	N	U	R	E	A	I	C	E				
C	A	P	O	N	S	M	A	R	I	A	T	H
A	B	O	U	T	M	O	O	D	S	O	R	A
G	O	W	N	C	O	I	N	S	C	R	A	M
E	V	E	P	H	A	S	E	B	A	S	T	E
S	E	R	I	G	E	A	N	T	D	O	N	E
U	R	I	N	A	R	E	E	L				
H	O	R	S	E	T	R	I	A	D	E	R	A
A	I	G	E	S	E	I	A	S	E	S	S	U
I	L	I	E	R	I	T	E	S	O	I	G	R
R	E	N	T	S	L	I	M	Y				

© 1997 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

All rights reserved.

04/18/97

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You may be tempted to make a spiteful remark today, however, keep your temper and stay out of a difficult situation. Use more than usual care while driving on the highway, thereby you won't get into any obstacles.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Avoid becoming involved in a risky financial scheme today. Set up a new budget for yourself, and leave room for recreational activities and hobbies, so that you won't be short of funds in an emergency.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may feel a bit confused this morning, so labour on gaining control on your surroundings. Be sure to avoid any disagreements with your mate and close friends or you could discover that you would be in the dog house.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be sensitive to your mate's mood, as this person may not be in the best of humours, so be patient and everything will blow over. Enjoy the company of some good friends later this evening at recreational activities you all will enjoy.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't be forceful in trying to gain a personal goal this morning, or you could get into a difficult situation. Focus your energy on business interests where you are successful and make the kind of money which is important.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you pursue a personal goal today, do nothing which will later impugn your integrity. Steer clear later this evening of a superior

who is in a bad mood and is looking for someone to take his or her frustrations out on.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't make any radical changes in your daily routines this morning, or you could discover that your efforts will lead to nowhere. Clear up any credit matters you have been putting off lately which will add to your income.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You should not be fooled by a person who claims to have your best interests at heart today, however, is in reality trying to disrupt an important project which gain your recognition with big wigs for your success.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) A few business associate may not be in the mood morning, however, avoid getting into a disagreement which would hamper your progress. Later this evening you can relax at home with your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You may have some difficulties with your daily career activities this morning, however, all will be brighter later in the day. Cooperate with fellow associates who have ideas for you to complete a project with some information they have.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) If you feel you must criticise the actions of a good friend today, make sure your comments are constructive and not harmful. Catch up on overdue tasks later this evening and thereby you can make your life more successful.

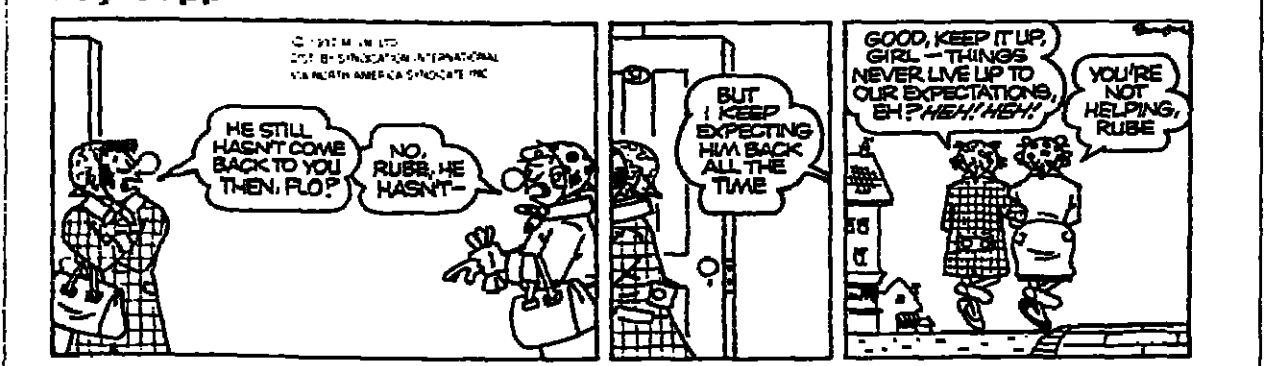
PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) If the situation at home is not pleasant this morning, get away with some close friends and relax until everything blows over. Keep your temper in check today or you could say something which you will later regret.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

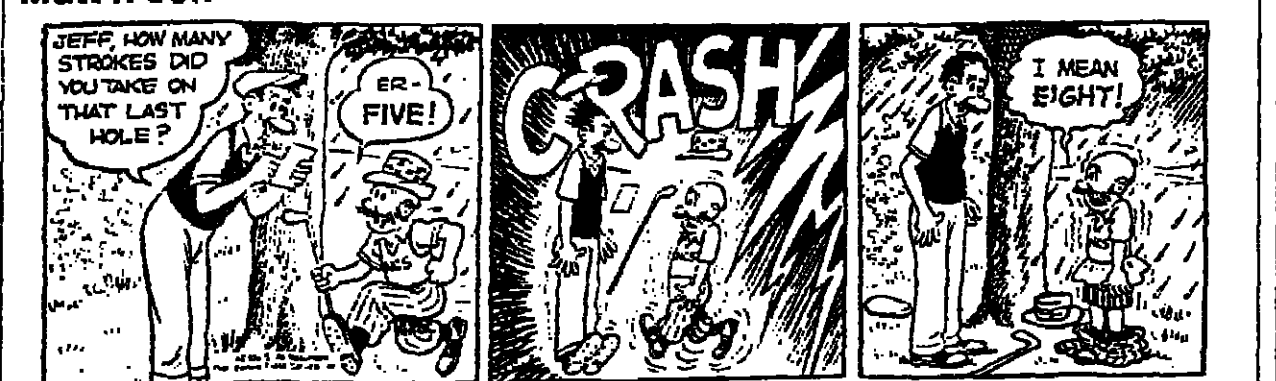
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



MOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1997

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Classified as government entity, Social Security Corporation must reduce stake in newspapers to 30%

**** THE INVESTMENTS** of the Social Security Corporation should be considered as government investments as the corporation was classified as an official government public institution by the Bureau for the Interpretation of laws, a senior official at the Prime Ministry has said.

According to Isa Tamash, president of the Bureau of Legislation and Opinion at the Prime Ministry, the decision to divest government equity includes those of the Social Security Corporation which, as a government entity, must sell its shares in the press companies to a level not exceeding 30 per cent. Mr. Tamash was responding to an inquiry about the corporation's investments in Jordanian newspapers.

Mr. Tamash said that the Ministry of Information had recently consulted the bureau in this regard and the Bureau of Legislation has confirmed that the Social Security Corporation is a government institution as the public sector was formed of two types of entities: the ministries and the official public institution. "The Social Security Corporation fits in this category," Mr. Tamash stressed.

As such, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mufawweh said the government is currently working on a settlement for its investments in the daily newspapers in accordance with the requirements of the press and publication law and within the specified time frame. Mr. Mufawweh indicated that by mid-May, the government will be unloading all its shares in the daily newspapers and its stake would be within the maximum limit of 30 per cent (Al Dustour).

Companies specialising in exports will enjoy exemption from income tax

**** THE HIGHER** Council for Investment has approved the establishment of Jordanian export companies specialised in exporting national products and goods. These companies, which will be exempt from paying income tax, were recommended for the Cabinet's endorsement with the aim of encouraging and boosting Jordanian exports.

According to an official source, the government's approval is an incentive for the private sector to come up with various export means and open new outside markets for Jordanian products. The source explained that previously only the manufacturer was given the tax exemption but now the door is open to those export companies to contract Jordanian industries and manufacturers to export national products and have their (companies) income exempted from tax (Al Rai).

Shair: Government studying higher equity for foreign investors

**** THE GOVERNMENT** is currently considering raising the level of equity to foreign investors who wish to invest in local companies, the director-general of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) has said. He indicated that the study covers some economic sectors and excludes others.

Wahib Shair, the AFM chief, told Al Rai that investment funds and foreign banks were willing to invest in Jordanian firms but the availability of shares was limited and, as such, those investors do not have enough investment outlets.

Kuwait bourse ready for futures trade

KUWAIT (R) — The Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE), the liveliest in the Arab World, is ready for the next step: Futures trading to be followed by an opening up to all foreign investors, the head of the bourse said Tuesday.

"We are ready for it," KSE Director-General Hisham Al Oteibi told Reuters of plans to introduce futures trading by investment portfolio managing institutions.

"It is a matter of timing and priorities...Not all the backup systems for futures trading are in place yet," he added of the awaited move which was approved by the commerce ministry late last year.

Futures trading "is the natural trend for the evolution of the market" which has been setting new records this week, triggering concern by some experts that the rise could be driven in some cases by heavy speculation and not fundamentals.

On Tuesday, the KSE index closed lower than Saturday's record of 2354.7 points at 2,334.3 — a 22.5 per cent rise from the start of 1997 — while trading value and

volume were lower than Monday's records but higher than last week's daily average.

The value soared on Monday to 125.8 million dinars (\$414 million) during the 2-1/2-hour session in which 445 million shares were traded.

The index rose by about 40 per cent a year in 1996 and 1995.

"Normally after a rise there are correction moves," Mr. Oteibi said. "They are always a possibility and are expected but not a crash...No way, impossible."

The word crash revives memories of the collapse of Souq Al Manakh unofficial exchange in 1982, resulting in a debt of over \$20 billion which the government is still trying to resolve.

The government at the time stepped in to buy shares in many concerns which it is now selling in the first phase of a privatisation programme that would eventually include the more complex, heavily-subsidised public utilities.

Mr. Oteibi said that an expert committee was working to complete this

year recommendations to amend laws to allow foreign investors in line with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

The tiny, oil-rich Arab Gulf state is a WTO member.

"We should open it up," he added. "It will give the market more depth, transparency and added credibility...It will also bring know-how, a very good data base and analytical base."

He advised small as well as large investors "to be educated and read the financial data which we and listed firms issue and base decisions accordingly, not following speculation."

Although trading on the KSE is open only to nationals of Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Qatar experts say trading value on the KSE was four times higher than the total for seven other official Arab bourses.

It is probably twice the size if the exchanges of fellow Arab Gulf Saudi Arabia and the UAE were included, they add.

Kuwait's foreign residents can trade through mutual funds.

In 1996 trading value on the KSE, which currently has some 65 listed firms with a market capitalisation of about \$24 billion, was \$19.2 billion, a daily average under \$100 billion.

The value in Saudi Arabia, the region's biggest economy and the world's largest oil exporter and producer, was \$6.8 billion.

According to experts, Kuwaiti shares will continue to move higher as companies turn in strong results and extra liquidity is injected into the market.

The average daily trading value for the first quarter of 1997 at 42 million dinars (\$138 million) is already sharply higher than the same time last year, while the main share indices have continued a steady rise this year on the back of the record 30 per cent or more increase in 1996.

"As for the general trend, I am expecting the market to go up from now until the end of the year," said Zaid Al Nageeb, vice-president at Kuwait Investment Company. "I am very optimistic for

the market," said portfolio manager Nageeb, but he added that there are likely to be cycles of surges followed by minor corrections.

Explaining the strong performance, he said many of the 60 or so listed companies have begun issuing quarterly results for the first time and the figures so far have been good.

Mr. Nageeb said banks and investment houses are also boosting an already liquid market by offering margin accounts — where an investor borrows money and invests in shares to try to earn a better return than the interest on the loan.

Fund managers said the overall economic performance of Kuwait has also raised confidence. Kuwait's oil-dependent economy has been given a lift from the 1996 oil-price hike, although prices have eased this year.

Saleh Al Selmi, head of the local share department at Kuwait International Investment Company, said Kuwait is now one of the "best emerging markets" in the Middle East. "Unfortunately, the

Kuwait market is closed (to foreigners) and we are pushing forward to make it an open market for everybody," said Mr. Selmi, who said allowing in foreigners will put Kuwait on the international financial map.

At present, only Arab Gulf investors can invest in Kuwaiti stocks, while those outside the region only have access to two listed mutual funds.

Despite the recent strong performance, experts also point to weaknesses in the market, including the heavy speculation by local investors who have few other areas in Kuwait to invest their spare cash.

"Kuwaitis love to gamble," commented one analyst, who said that while good results justified the rise in some stocks, other shares were moving higher in their wake without any indication that the companies are performing well.

Experts also said the market authorities must clamp down on insider trading and prevent share price manipulation if the bourse is to invite in foreign investors.

India keeps UAE gold trade ablaze

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Mohammad Kanj pulled up the shutters of his gold shop in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to start another busy day despite growing competition from mushrooming shops.

"Thanks God, business is always good although many more shops have opened here. There is strong competition in the market but this is offset by the strong demand for gold, especially by Indians," he said.

"They (Indians) love gold and many of them buy large amounts to take to their country. You can say that among every five customers, there are two Indians," said Mr. Kanj, an Abu Dhabi-based gold trader for more than 20 years.

From a small Gulf desert oasis where gold was a rarity before oil was struck a few decades ago, the UAE is now classified as the world's biggest spender on the precious metal in terms of population.

World Gold Council (WGC) figures show per capita consumption of gold in the UAE stands at around 30 grammes (one ounce) a year, the highest in the world. Oil giant Saudi Arabia came second, at 19 grammes (0.65 ounces) a year.

The UAE emirate of

Dubai was last year the second largest gold trade hub in the world after Singapore, with its imports of the metal peaking at around 350 tonnes compared with 318 tonnes in 1995.

But it overtook Singapore for the first time this year, with its imports reaching 100 tonnes in the first two months compared with 90 tonnes by Singapore, according to the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The figure is set to surge as there has been a rush by buyers to benefit from lower prices during the annual month-long shopping festival which started in March.

Gold sales are expected to exceed 900 million dirhams (\$245 million) during the shopping gala, which ends this week.

Officials said the surge in the UAE's gold trade was caused mainly by India's decision in 1996 to raise the ceiling on gold imports per person to 10 kilograms (22 pounds) every six months, from five kilograms (11 pounds) a year.

"India is the largest gold consumer in the world, with an average of between 400 and 500 tonnes per year," said Sultan Al Mansuri, the chamber's deputy director.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOSEIN SALEH CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN									
TELEPHONE: 507172 / 507173									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 30/04/1997									
PART 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	T / E	DEV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF SHARES	TRADING	PRICE	CHANGE	PRICE
269,000	112,000	ANAB BANK	11.6	1.58	5	580	148600	231.00	232.00
1,100	1,100	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	11.6	0.00	19	190	4786	1.73	1.73
6,900	4,100	CHARTERED BANK	9.4	3.30	5	12200	94480	4.50	4.50
2,100	2,100	THE MOUTON	12.0	2.43	13	1300	24738	1.10	1.10
2,950	2,440	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	18.7	0.00	10	132	1383	2.43	2.43
1,800	1,800	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	18.8	0.00	1	1	360	3.50	3.50
3,800	3,800	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	18.1	0.00	3	223	743	3.50	3.50
2,850	1,040	WEST AL-HAL (BETHUN)	6	14.56	2	550	571	1.07	1.03
BANK SECTOR TOTALS									
INDEX: 191.40 CHNG: -0.57									
2,500	1,740	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	4.9	11.56	1	90	87	1.74	1.73
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS									
INDEX: 116.76 CHNG: -0.06									
5,050	4,100	ANAB BANK	17.2	2.96	6	40270	178172	4.35	4.35
1,510	930	WILL. PORTFOLIO	0.00	0.00	7	1780	1715	.97	.98
800	480	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	14.6	0.00	1	780	360	.49	.49
2,720	2,990	ANAB BANK	7.8	0.00	3	380	1086	2.96	3.00
2,230	1,650	DEFINED CO.	7.8	6.71	1	100	164	1.65	1.64
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS									
INDEX: 102.83 CHNG: -0.38									
2,800	3,060	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	25.0	2.96	21	10137	37867	3.66	3.72
6,100	4,950	ANAB BANK	12.3	2.11	8	1130	858	5.90	5.70
2,480	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COMM.	8	0.00	6	494	1243	2.44	1.78
1,280	8,680	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	8	3.32	4	4900	24738	1.10	1.10
6,400	3,130	ANAB BANK	8.4	8.82	1	50	170	3.40	3.40
840	490	DEFINED CO.	10.6	0.00	13	11400	8927	.52	.51
1,910	1,910	WILL. PORTFOLIO	8.1	10.91	7	2100	1155	.54	.55
1,800	1,100	ANAB BANK	15.7	0.00	6	1600	772	.79	.79
1,750	1,130	ANAB BANK	15.8	0.00	6	2450	2.67	2.67	.01
1,370	870	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	26.6	0.00	13	2880	3940	.68	.70
1,170	1,130	ANAB BANK	26.6	0.00	6	1600	2277	1.43	1.43
2,660	1,410	WILL. PORTFOLIO	9	.18	3	880	1202	1.43	1.41
1,780	1,140	ANAB BANK	15.8	0.00	28	7300	1308	1.43	1.41
1,230	1,840	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	15.9	0.00	5	2000	1740	.87	.87
1,380	1,380	ANAB BANK	18.0	0.00	3	29000	23630	1.11	1.12
1,440	890	DEFINED CO.	28.3	0.00	3	2000	1780	.90	.89
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS									
INDEX: 114.42 CHNG: -1.10									
GRAND TOTAL									
INDEX: 180.22 CHNG: -0.16									
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR WEDNESDAY 30/04/1997									
800	410	WILL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	1	280	128	.54	.51
780	440	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	12.0	0.00	3	2000	960	.45	.45
1,440	670	ANAB BANK	55.1	0.00	1	360	148	.68	.68
840	370	ANAB BANK	8	0.00	40	13678	60345	.44	.44
780	740	AL-SHARQ	8	0.00	1	40000	18600	.44	.44
740	810	ANAB BANK	8	0.00	3	1900	1102	.58	.58
630	430	ANAB BANK	10.7	0.00	12	8450	3730	.74	.74
720	490	WILL. PORTFOLIO	2	0.00	2	94	46	.50	.50
640	400	WILL. PORTFOLIO	2	0.00	2	12460	8977	.61	.60
640	430	WILL. PORTFOLIO	2	0.00	2	1500	860	.56	.56
980	720	JOB. INTERNATIONAL	2	0.00	2	500	365	.72	.72
840	430	ANAB BANK	2	0.00	2	100	51	.51	.51
1,210	860	UNION COMMERCIAL	2	0.00	4	2250	1423	.87	.89
770	580	WILL. PORTFOLIO	2	0.00	4	8750	2438	.70	.70
640	390	WILL. PORTFOLIO	25.9	0.00	5	2010	844	.42	.42
760	580	WILL. PORTFOLIO	2	0.00	5	2900	208	.70	.78
820	490	WILL. PORTFOLIO	2	0.00	5	700	490	.70	.70
870	530	WILL. PORTFOLIO	7.7	0.00	6	8250	2465	.70	.66
GRAND TOTAL									
106 231082 107785									

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS

World gems, hand made in Jordan in 18 & 21 k. gold. A truly unique shop.

Outstanding designs.

Amra Hotel Shops 6th Circle, Amman Also in Brazil

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

SIGN UP FOR EVENING CLASSES ROOM 102

"I signed up to learn a foreign language—Husbandese."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Anglin

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Answer: AHTEB, DANAP, GLUCED, GULJEG

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: WINCE WALTZ FLORAL INFRM

Saturday's Jumbles: WINCE WALTZ FLORAL INFRM

Big furnished or unfurnished villa for rent

Location: Behind New English School, 3 bedrooms, big reception, big garden, nice entrance.

Abdoun Real Estate Tel: 810605 - 810609 Fax: 810520

* We have many villas and semi villas furnished or unfurnished for rent.

STUDIO HAIG Professional quality in 1 hour service

Develop your colour film at our shop and get:

* JUMBO photo size 30% larger.

* Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm.

Shmeisani - Opposite Grindlays Bank. Phone: 604042 Sweiffish Tel: 823891

FOR RENT: DELUXE VILLAS & FLATS (FURNISHED & UNFURNISHED)

BYBLOS

SECURITY HOSPITALITY GASTRONOMY

New Low Season Rates. Fax 863051

HOTEL 863944

FOR RENT: DELUXE VILLAS AND APARTMENTS - FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED

JAMAL REAL ESTATE

Tel.: 699369

FOR YOUR Advertisement in Jordan Times

Call tel: 667171 ext. 223

Crystal Quality Serviced Suites

* One & Two Bedrooms * Fully Equipped Kitchens * Daily & Long Stay * Reasonable Rates

Sub Circle Tel 692672 Fax 674551

CROWN HOTEL

INDOOR HEATED SWIMMING POOL

SALINA, JACUZZI & MASSAGE

FITNESS ROOM

TENNIS & SQUASH COURTS

TEL: 758180 Radio & TV Station Rd.

SANABEL REAL ESTATE

FOR RENT: DELUXE VILLAS

Appartments in Amman

For details please call Tel: 864230 Fax: 864231

FOR YOUR Advertisement in Jordan Times

Call tel: 667171 ext. 223

Chang, Courier upset; Agassi advances in Atlanta

ATLANTA, Georgia (R) — Michael Chang and Jim Courier made abrupt exits while Andre Agassi won easily in first-round play at the \$328,000 ATT challenge on Tuesday.

Agassi, playing in his first tournament since his April 19 marriage to Brooke Shields, gave a 48-minute clinic in his first-round match against Brazil's Jaime Oncins.

Agassi, ranked 29 and seeded fourth, made short work of Oncins, a qualifier, winning 6-3 6-2 and giving himself a 27th birthday present.

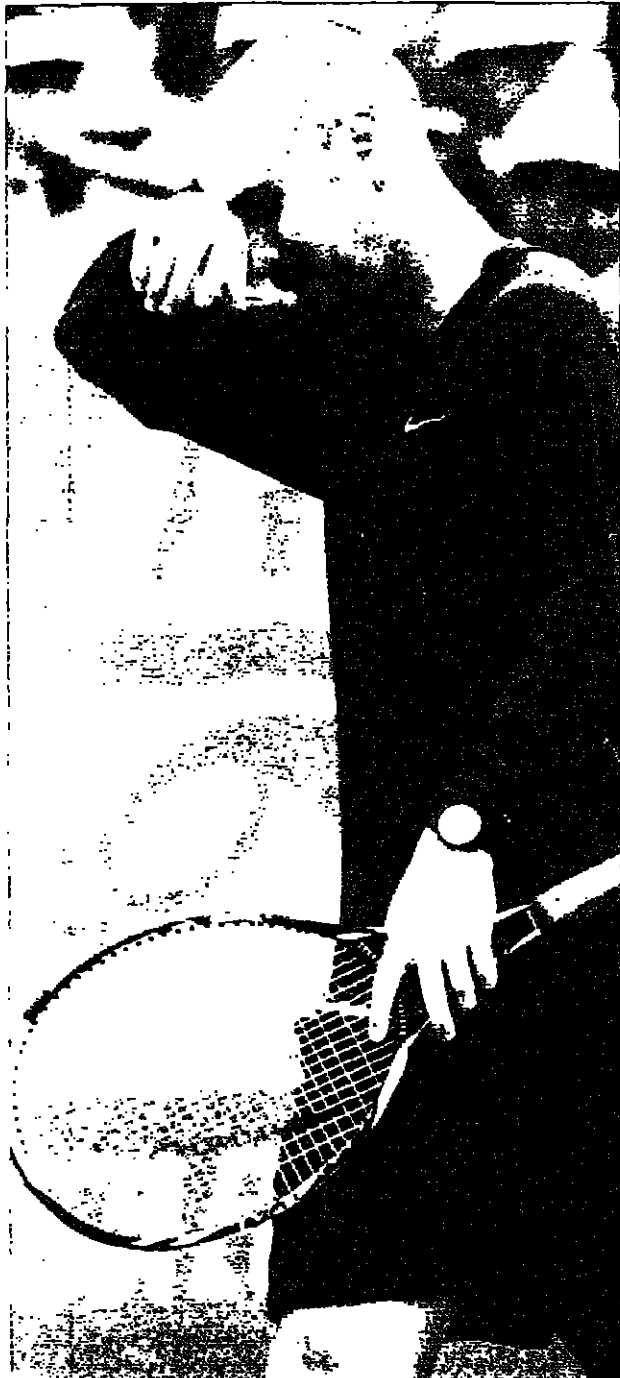
Chang, the top-seed and fresh from his fourth title victory of the year in Orlando on Sunday looked anything but lively against Brazil's Fernando Meligeni, going out 2-6 6-3 6-4. It was Meligeni's first win against a player ranked in the top 10.

Third-seeded Jim Courier allowed a big lead to slip away against qualifier Steve Campbell, with Campbell earning the victory 2-6 6-4 6-3.

Chang, ranked second in the world and Meligeni, ranked 72, played a classic clay court match of prolonged groundstroke battles. But the momentum turned in Meligeni's favour after he won a long opening game of the second set. Pumping up the crowd with his antics, Meligeni held on for the second set 6-3 then scored a key break against Chang in the first game of the third set.

After that, Meligeni capitalised on a few loose errors by Chang to keep the lead and serve out the victory 6-4 when Chang netted a backhand.

"The first game of the second set changed the match," Meligeni said. "I won this game and now I knew I had a chance. I started to believe a little bit and I think I play my best



Andre Agassi

match of my career," Chang, hoping to overtake Pete Sampras for the number one ranking later this year, said the Meligeni match was a setback. "It's disappointing because being number one

this year is definitely realistic and I want to put some heat on Pete," Chang said. "I don't think I put enough pressure on Fernando. I should have been in there putting away some volleys. That was a crucial mistake

today."

Agassi dominated Oncins, ranked 128, throughout the match, breaking Oncins easily and finishing the match with an ace. He repaired a record which had seen him lose four straight opening round matches prior to Davis Cup in early April.

"You've got to be in the tournaments to win the tournaments," Agassi joked afterward. "I got one down. Things turned around for me at Davis Cup and I'm finding my form again." Agassi won both his Davis Cup singles matches against the Netherlands helping the U.S. to victory.

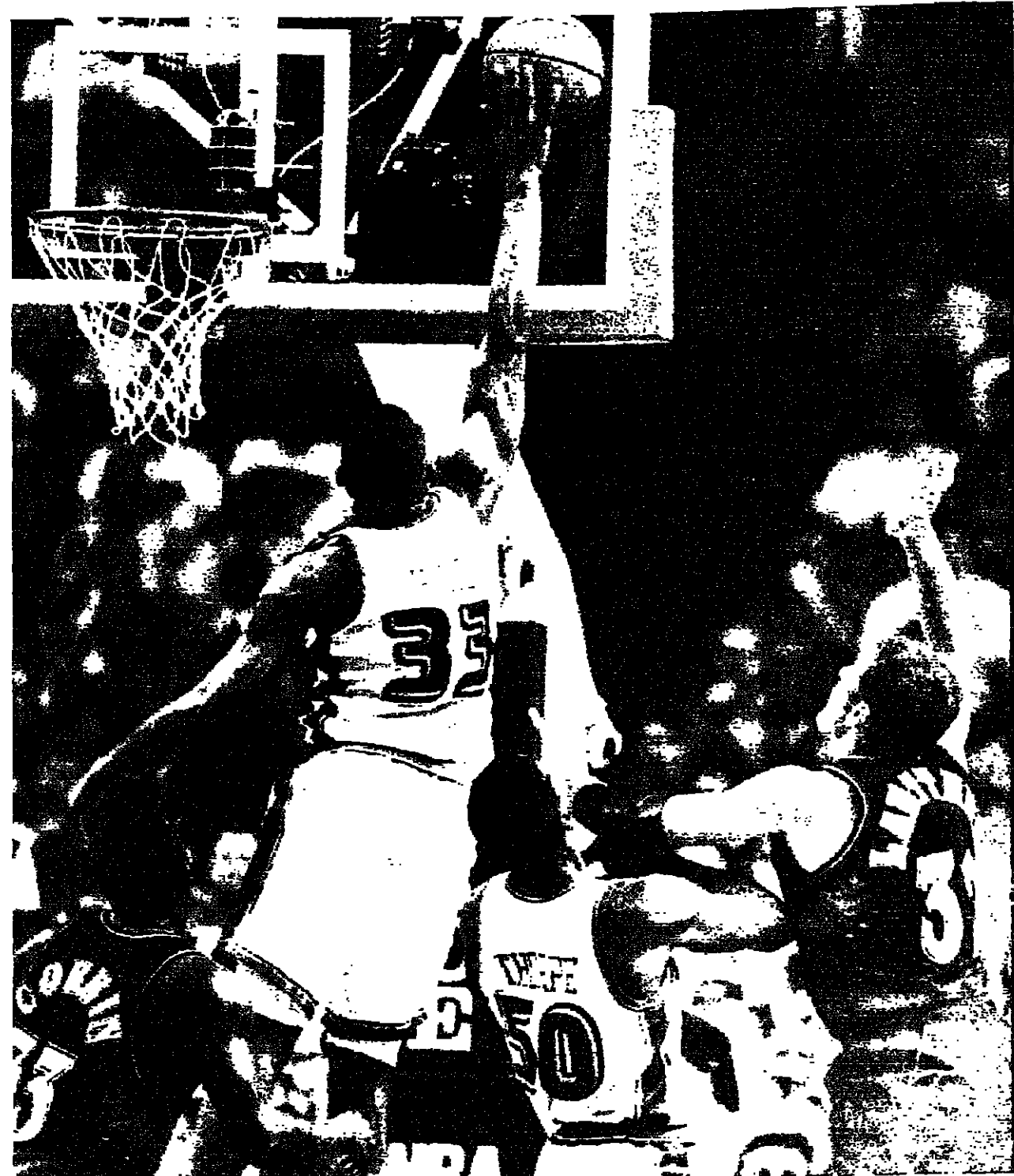
Courier has been in a slump since early February, interrupted only by a semi-final finish in key Biscayne in March, his best result since winning the Doha title in January.

Courier led 5-0 in the first set before Campbell found his confidence and Courier's shots began falling short.

"I definitely had a let-down," Courier said. "I'm definitely disappointed to play this poorly. The first five games showed if I play the way I know how to play I should win this match. But I stopped hitting the ball as deep and gave him an opportunity. I had a concentration letdown in the second set.

Campbell, ranked 236, was at first relieved not to embarrass himself.

"Players have nightmares about losing 6-0 6-0," he said. "You'd been known for that for a while. But once I got the first break, I started to loosen up and play a little better. But even at match point I thought he could come back, he's still standing."



Detroit Pistons' Grant Hill (33) rejects a shot by Atlanta Hawks' Christian Laettner (R) as Laettner struggles with Pistons' Otis Thorpe (50) and Hawks' Tyrone Corbin (L) watches during the closing minutes of game three in round one of the NBA playoffs at the Palace in Auburn Hills. Detroit defeated Atlanta 99-91 to take a 2-1 lead in the series (Reuters photo)

Rockets sweep Timberwolves to reach NBA semifinals

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — Charles Barkley scored 20 points and took over down the stretch as the hot-shooting Houston Rockets swept into the Western Conference semifinals with a 125-120 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday.

In the final 2-1/2 minutes, Barkley had three free throws, a key rebound, Fed Mario Elie for a layup and sank a clutch jumper to give the Rockets a sweep of the best-of-five series. Houston awaits the winner of the Seattle-Phoenix series and will have home-court advantage regardless of its opponent.

"I was very proud of our team tonight, because if you want to be a good team, you have to finish these games out as soon as possible," Barkley said.

"We were very fortunate to win. We played terrible defence. We gave up way too many points. We have to improve the next series if we're gonna move on."

Matt Maloney made six three-pointers and scored a career-high 26 points for the Rockets, who had five players with at least 17 points in the highest-scoring playoff game so far. Houston made 15-of-28 three-pointers, while Minnesota sank 6-of-15.

Tom Gugliotta had 27 points and 10 rebounds and Dean Garrett added 26 and 15 rebounds for the sixth-seeded Timberwolves, who were hosting a playoff game for the first time in team history. They lost all three games by an average of 11.3 points and went 0-7 this season against the

Rockets.

Kevin Garnett scored 17 points, Doug West added 16 and Robinson 11 for the Wolves, who shot 49 per cent (47-of-96).

In Atlanta, Lindsey Hunter scored 26 points as the Detroit Pistons took a 2-1 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series with a 99-91 victory over the Atlanta Hawks.

Grant Hill added 24 points for the Pistons, who blew almost all of a 16-point halftime lead but recovered with another strong fourth quarter reminiscent of their game two win in Atlanta. Fifth-seeded Detroit can wrap up the best-of-five series with a home win on Friday.

Hunter scored 13 points in the second quarter, helping Detroit open a 56-40 halftime lead. He scored nine more in the fourth quarter after Atlanta had pulled within one point, including a coast-to-coast layup that clinched it with less than a minute left.

"It looked like Lindsey just decided to take over the game," Hawks guard Steve Smith said. "He took a lot of shots tonight that he was passing up in games one and two."

Eastern Conference

Orlando 88 Miami 75
(Miami leads best-of-five series tied 2-1)
Detroit 99 Atlanta 91
(Detroit leads best-of-five series 2-1)

Western Conference

Phoenix 110 Seattle 103
(Phoenix leads best-of-five series 2-1)
Houston 125 Minnesota 120
(Houston leads series 3-0)

U.S. aim to rule soccer world — eventually

LONDON (R) — The Americans want to build a World Cup-winning team as part of their drive to establish soccer in the United States, one of the leaders of their fledgling league said on Tuesday.

"Our goal is to win the World Cup by 2010," said Sunil Gulati, Major League Soccer (MLS) deputy commissioner, conceding that his country had a lot of work to do to reach that target.

The Americans reached the second round of the 1994 World Cup before losing to eventual winners Brazil. But the main legacy of that U.S.-based tournament was the establishment of MLS — a domestic league.

Gulati told the Soccerex '97 conference that the development of talented hometown players was needed to ensure that the MLS did not go the same way as its predecessor, the NASL.

The NASL brought veterans such as Pele and Franz Beckenbauer to play in the U.S. in the 1970s amid great excitement and big crowds. But it failed to put down firm roots and ultimately withered and died.

The MLS plans to develop a scholarship programme to allow talented teenagers to train with clubs while continuing their studies. The aim is to develop players good enough to attract the crowds and finally make the national team competitive with the dominant Europeans and South Americans.

Gulati said soccer was seeking a

place at the top table of U.S. sports alongside American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey.

"The goal is to be one of the five major U.S. sports."

The MLS was launched last year with 10 clubs, attracting an average of more than 17,000 fans to its matches. It will expand to 12 teams next season as Miami and Chicago are given franchises.

The MLS, which recruits players centrally, has tried to stimulate interest among America's Hispanic population by signing top Latin Americans such as Colombia's Carlos Valderrama.

But soccer still faces an uphill struggle in a nation where 90 per cent of the population do not know its basic rules.

Gulati said that the MLS had been cautious in its initial investment, spending just \$45 million on players fees and salaries in its first two years.

He contrasted this with the more aggressive and expensive tactics of Japan's J. League but said only time would tell if the MLS had got its strategy right. "We won't know the answer for five-10 years," he said.

FIFA suspends Asprilla

ZURICH (R) — FIFA suspended Paraguayan goalkeeper Jose Chilavert and Colombia striker Faustino Asprilla on Tuesday as punishment for fighting during a World Cup match last month.

The volatile Chilavert received a four-match suspension and Asprilla was banned for two after the pair came to blows during a pivotal qualification match in Asuncion on April 2.

The incident triggered a melee involving players, both benches and police that delayed the match for five minutes. Paraguay went on to win 2-1.

Colombia's Victor Aristizabal was also suspended for three matches and fined 5,000 Swiss francs (\$3,390).

Argentine goalkeeper Ignacio Gonzalez and teammate Gustavo Zapata were both suspended for three matches with compatriot Nelson Vivas for one for their part in a 10-minute scrap that erupted during a 2-1 defeat by Bolivia in La Paz.

The Bolivian Football Association was also fined 100,000 Swiss francs and Argentina 50,000.

TODAY AT

CINEMA

TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Richard Gere ...in

PRIMAL FEAR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Glenn Close ...in

101 DALMATIANS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15

Michael Douglas & Val Kilmer ...in

THE GHOST &

THE DARKNESS

Shows: 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL:699238

PLAZA

Eddie Murphy ...in

METRO

Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Demi Moore ...in

STRIPTASE

Show: 5:00 p.m.

CINEMA

TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

Keanu Reeves ...in

CHAIN REACTION

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD "2"

Michael Jordan ...in

SPACEJAM

Shows: 3:30, 6:00

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

TEL: 625155

The political satire

AMN YA HO

For reservations call 625155

Cubs erupt with 14 hits

CHICAGO (R) — Brooks Kieschnick homered twice and drove in two runs — both career highs — as the Chicago Cubs overcame an early five-run deficit and outslugged the Montreal Expos 14-8 for their fourth win in five games.

Shawon Dunston and Dave Clark drove in two runs apiece for the Cubs, who established a season high for runs. Ten different players scored for Chicago, which collected 14 hits off five pitchers and is 4-1 since a 2-17 start.

"Whether we were whipping boys or whatever, that was what we were playing like," Kieschnick said. "Now we're starting to play better, we're starting to get some breaks and hopefully this thing will turn all the way around."

After Chicago took the lead for good with two runs in the fourth on RBI doubles by pitcher Steve Trachsel and Dunston, Kieschnick added a run-scoring single in a six-run sixth that made it 14-7.

Henry Rodriguez hit two solo homers for Montreal, which belted five homers.

In Atlanta, Chan Ho Park allowed one run and two hits over five innings and Todd Zeile and Mike Piazza each drove in a pair of runs as the Los Angeles Dodgers snapped a four-game skid with a 6-2 win over the Atlanta Braves on Tuesday.

Park (1-1) walked four and struck out three in his first start since April 9th.

"I'm really happy, especially since we lost the last four games," said Park. "He (Zeile) helped me get the win and I'm very appreciative."

Greg Gagne chipped in three hits, including a solo homer in the third, for Los Angeles, which had dropped seven of its last eight games.

In Cincinnati, Mark Clark

tossed seven shutout innings and John Olerud had a pair of run-scoring singles as the New York Mets held off the staggering Cincinnati Reds 3-1 for their third straight win.

Clark (3-1) scattered seven hits with three walks and three strikeouts for his third straight win.

Bret Boone drove in the only run for Cincinnati, which has dropped seven of its last eight games. 11 of 13 and 16 of 20.

At Florida, Bobby Bonilla hit a two-run triple in the bottom of the eighth inning and Kevin Brown rebounded from his first loss of the season with eight strong innings as the Florida Marlins edged the San Diego Padres 2-1 for their fifth straight win.

"My favourite play is the triple," Florida manager Jim Leyland said. "Bobby's always been a producer and he will produce all year. He's starting to break loose."

The loss wasted a brilliant performance by San Diego's Sean Bergman, who was making his first start of the season. Bergman allowed two hits in six innings.

In Houston, Jeff Bagwell homered and drove in two runs, and Sean Berry hit a tie-breaking homer in the fourth inning before getting hurt as the Houston Astros claimed a 3-1 victory over the Colorado Rockies.

Berry stroked his first homer of the season to make it 2-1 with one out in the fourth.

Berry, who was on the disabled list from April 7th-21st, left the game in the sixth inning with a bruised triceps tendon in his left arm after getting hit by a pitch there in the second inning.

"I'm just going to ice, ice, ice, and go out again tomorrow," Berry said. "We've got a lefty going in."



Tony Batista of the Oakland A's makes an over the shoulder catch to Rob Sandy Alomar of the Cleveland Indians of a hit in the second inning at Jacobs Field. Batista then collided with Jason Giambi. Both players were shaken up but stayed in the game (Reuters photo)

Montreal (on Wednesday) and I expect to play."

In Philadelphia, Mike Lieberthal hit a three-run homer and rookie Calvin Maduro allowed two runs over seven innings, leading the Philadelphia Phillies to an 8-2 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates.

The Phillies snapped a 1-1 tie with four runs in the fifth.

"I'm getting more confidence all the time,"

Maduro said. "I have to spot my fastball better but my changeup is working well. The team seems to believe in me and that helps my confidence."

Dale Sveum had three hits for the Pirates.

In St. Louis, Ron Gant hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning and Ray Lankford went 4-for-4 with two home runs, lifting the St. Louis Cardinals

to a 9-7 victory over the San Francisco Giants.

Dmitri Young led off the ninth with an infield single off closer Rod Beck (0-1) and Delino Deshields followed with a single to center field. Gant then drove a 2-2 pitch over the left-field fence for his third homer.

"It was a pitch that I could not let go," Gant said. "I hit it in the sweet spot and gave our team a victory."

Rumman Hill Climb qualifier set for Friday

By Ronfan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's most popular auto sports event, the Rumman Hill Climb, kicks off Friday with 49 Jordanian participants taking part.

First initiated by His Majesty King Hussein in 1956, the Rumman Hill Climb track is three-kilometres long in one of the most scenic parts of the Kingdom near Jarash.

Competitors in the two session event will be trying to break the record set by King Hussein in 1989 in his Mercedes Benz 190 with a time of 1: 57: 28.

This race is considered a winning ticket to qualify for the International Rumman Hill Climb sponsored by Pepsi in August 15, 1997.

Jordan's Bashar Bustami is a strong candidate to win the race which will allow him to compete in the international event in August.

Event organisers, the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) said that the dri-

vers' whose cars are not technically equipped in what concerns safety measurements would be allowed to compete Friday.

Meanwhile, in the international event drivers are asked to equip their cars with safety measurements that range from having a steel cage and steel bars for protection.

Jordan's champions Ahmad Dawoud, Ma'rouf Abu Samra, Bashar Bustami and Tareq Taba'a are just a few names who will compete in the event with hopes for the international competition.

Two ladies will take part in this year's event: Tala Shawa and Nancy Majali.

The Rumman Hill Climb takes place 17-kilometres north of Amman just off the Jarash Highway, two kilometres north of Rumman village and the results are entered in the Jordan Drivers Open Championship.

Trophies will be distributed to overall fastest time, single fastest time, fastest car in the group and overall fastest time registered by a lady.



Kentucky Derby contender Cryto Star receives a kiss on the nose from his trainer Wayne Catalano in his stall on the backside of Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. Cryto Star is preparing for the 123rd running of the Derby which will take place on May 3 (Reuters photo)

Williams leads Indians past Athletics

CLEVELAND (R) — Matt Williams snapped a seventh-inning tie with a three-run homer and Charles Nagy pitched seven innings to lead the Cleveland Indians to a 10-4 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday.

After Scott Brosius led off the top of the seventh with his first homer to tie the game 4-4, the Indians answered with three runs in their half.

"It's all about putting good swings on good pitches and not missing them when you get them," Williams said. "It's about relaxing and letting it happen, instead of making it happen."

In Boston, Garret Anderson's RBI single scored Jim Leyritz in the top of the ninth inning to lift the Anaheim Angels to a 5-4 victory over the Boston Red Sox.

With two out in the ninth, Leyritz doubled to left field off Butch Henry.

It was the eighth come-from-behind win for the Angels and seventh in their last at-bat.

In Chicago, Albert Belle's sacrifice fly down the right-field line with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted the Chicago White Sox to a 2-1 victory over the Texas Rangers.

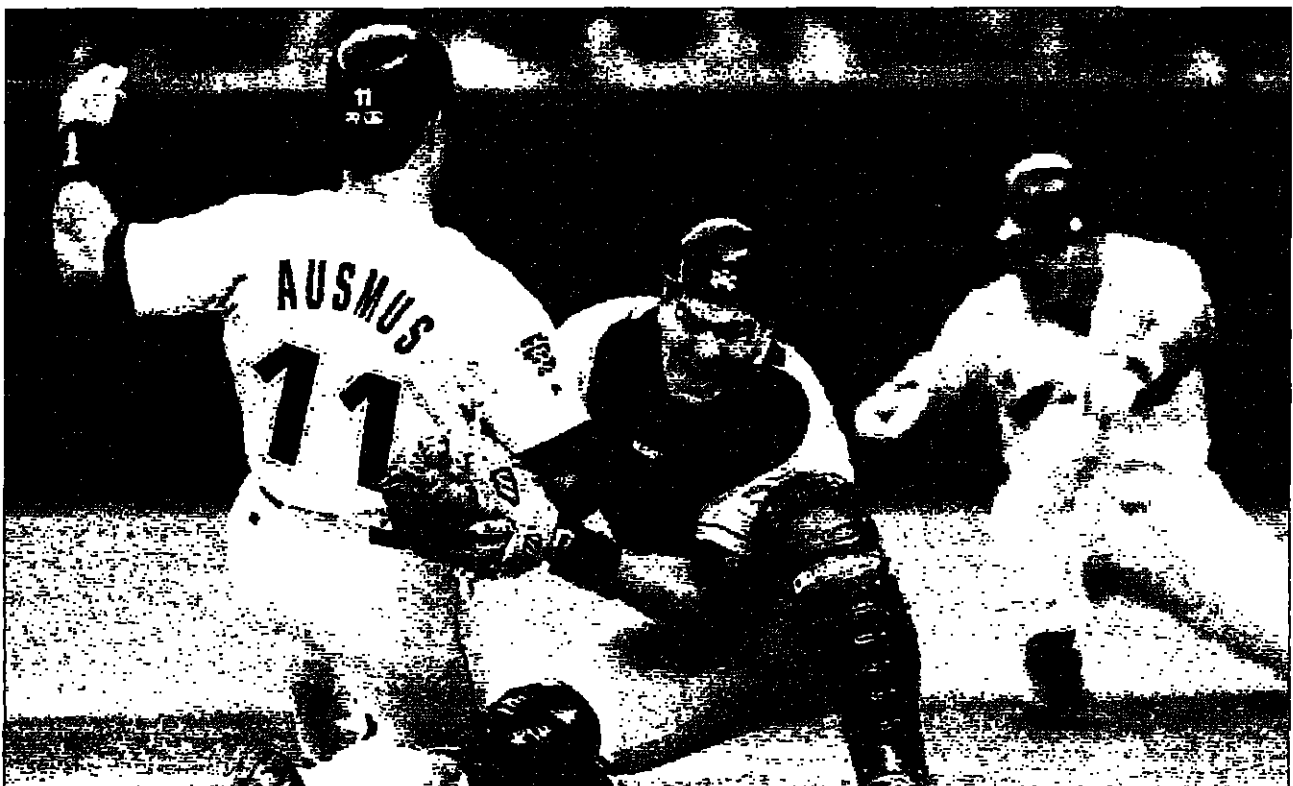
Jaime Navarro (2-1) went the distance for his first complete game of the season, allowing one run and six hits with one walk and seven strikeouts.

"All I did was go out there tonight and throw my game," Navarro said.

In Detroit, Cal Eldred combined with two relievers on a seven-hitter and Jeff Cirillo singled home the go-ahead run in the top of the seventh inning as the Milwaukee Brewers edged the Detroit Tigers 2-1 for their fourth straight win.

Eldred limited Detroit to one run and five hits over six innings with four walks and six strikeouts.

Damien Easley went 3-



Colorado Rockies Kirt Manwaring (R) tags Houston Astros Brad Ausmus out at home plate in the top of the seventh inning. Teammate Bob Abreu (Far R) cheers Ausmus. The Astros defeated the Rockies 3-1 in the Astrodome (Reuters photo)

for-4 for his third three-hit game of the season, but the Tigers lost for the fifth time in six games.

In Kansas City, Chili Davis led off the bottom of the 10th inning with the 300th homer of his career, giving the Kansas City Royals a 6-5 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

Davis drilled a 3-2 pitch from reliever Paul Quantrill over the left-centre field fence. The switch-hitter is 6-for-9 against Quantrill in his career.

"What was so weird about it was (third-base coach) Rich Dauer said to me in the dugout 'Oh, you're leading off. Well, the games over.'"

Jose Offerman, activated off the disabled list today, hit a three-run homer and Johnny Damon added a two-run single for the Royals.

At Minnesota, Brady Anderson's two-run triple highlighted a four-run sixth inning as the Baltimore Orioles rallied for 6-4 vic-

tory over Minnesota, handing the twins their sixth straight loss.

Roberto Alomar went 3-for-5 and Anderson, Pete Incaviglia and Rafael Palmeiro each had two hits for the Orioles, who are 3-0

against Minnesota this year. Incaviglia hit his first homer of the season.

In New York, former Yankee Russ Davis had a career-high four RBI and the Seattle Mariners used a five-run eighth inning to defeat the New York Yankees 7-5.

WANTED

European household is looking for live-in house keepers, preferably a couple. Good command of English is a must.

Tel. No.: 5471213 between 11:00 to 19:00 until Saturday. After that Tel. No.: 5531552 between 11:00 to 19:00

Furnished Villa For Rent

A villa of two basement floors in addition to a second floor consists of two flats, each flat consisting of 2 bedrooms, bathroom, big kitchen, veranda, salon, dining room overlooking a garden. The 1st floor of an area 300 sq.m., consists of 3 bedrooms (one is master), 3 bathrooms, big kitchen, living room, salon, dining, laundry room. The basement consists of big lounge, kitchen, bathroom, garage for 2 cars, guard's room and maid room with its utilities. Super deluxe new building.

Location: Airport Road
Please call owner at Tel. 079 23106

"GIPSY KINGS"
LOS NINOS DE SARA
FORTE GRAND
ARAB HORSE CLUB 01-5-97
FORTE GRAND CONCERT 2-5-97
D.J.
LIG...
GOLDEN WINGEST.
TICKET :-
-FORTE GRAND HOTEL (SHARIF)
-ALFREDO RESTAURANT
-FREDDY FOR MUSIC (GABRIEL)
-FOUAD SUPER MARKET (SHEFEN)
-MUSIC BOX (CIRCLE)
-YOUSSEF S
-MOKA CAFE (ABDOLAH)
-TECHNICAL (SHEFEN)
-FIRAS STEREO (ABAL AL-HUSSEIN)
-CHILI HOUSE (SHEFEN)
SHUTTLE BUS AVAILABLE BY JET AT FORTE GRAND HOTEL AT 7 PM
RESERVATION AND INFORMATION: FORTE GRAND TEL. 696511

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& YANNAH HIRSCH
©1996 Youssef Sharif & Yannah Hirsch, Inc.

IT'S THERE FOR ALL TO COUNT

Neither vulnerable, South deals.

NORTH
♠ K J 4 2
♥ 10 7 5 3
♦ 10 8
♣ K 10 7

WEST
♠ 7 5 3
♥ K Q
♦ Q J 9 4 2
♣ Q 9

EAST
♠ A Q 10
♥ J 9
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ 8 6 4 2

SOUTH
♠ 8 5
♥ A 8 6 4 2
♦ A K
♣ A J 5 3

The bidding:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1♠ Pass 2♠ Pass
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠
If you are a good guesser, four hearts is a simple contract to make once trumps break evenly. If you are not, you have to rely on sound technique to get home.
Once North raised hearts, South made a help-suit trial bid in clubs. Despite holding minimum values, North's four trumps and club fillers were persuasive arguments in favor of going straight to game.
West led the queen of diamonds.

and South was reasonably happy with his contract. After winning the king of diamonds, declarer cashed the two red-suit aces and then cashed with a trump. When hearts broke evenly declarer's satisfaction increased.

In with a high trump, West exited with a low spade. Since West was now marked with 8 points in the red suits and, with the ace of spades as well, might have made a takeout double of one heart, declarer finessed the jack. East won the queen, cashed the ace and exited with the ten, giving declarer one club discard. But declarer still had to find the queen of clubs to lead the game. After cashing the ace of clubs, the ten was run to West's queen — down one.

South could have done a little better. Let's suppose that when West shifted to the three of spades after winning the second trump, declarer had played low from dummy! East could win cheaply, but is employed. The ace of spades and another gives declarer two spade tricks and limits declarer's losses to two spades and a trump. A diamond allows South to ruff in hand while discarding a club from the table, and the club loser vanishes. A club return solves declarer's problem in that suit. Making four odd.

Chapuisat to seek French citizenship

ZURICH (R) — Swiss soccer international Stephane Chapuisat will seek French citizenship to make it easier to move among European Union countries but will continue to play for Switzerland's national team, a newspaper reported on Wednesday.

"As soon as I have a day off I will go to the embassy in Dueseldorf and apply for French citizenship," The Borussia Dortmund centre-forward told the mass-circulation Blick.

"In June 1998 my contract with Dortmund runs out. As a Frenchman I would be an EU citizen. This opens up new opportunities for me," he was quoted as saying.

French citizenship would make it easier for Chapuisat, 28, to transfer to France next year because he would not be a foreigner.

Chapuisat, who is married to a Frenchwoman, told the paper he would maintain his Swiss citizenship as well and continue to play for the national team.



Labour leader Tony Blair and his wife Cherie shake hands with supporters on Wednesday, during a rally in Stockton-on-Tees market on the final day of the election campaign. As the British election campaign entered its last 24 hours, Mr. Tony Blair asked the country to choose a future of hope with his party (AFP photo)

Labour seems already victorious in countdown to British elections

'Don't throw success away in one careless moment' — Major pleads

LONDON (AFP) — Hours from elections widely expected to put him out of work and bring in a Labour government, Prime Minister John Major Wednesday pleaded with voters not to "throw away our success... in one careless moment."

Challenger Tony Blair warned that a fifth consecutive term would mean "a future which threatens every family in Britain."

Mr. Major called the Thursday general elections "Britain's day of destiny."

"One cross in the wrong place on the ballot paper tomorrow," he said in a final TV address, "could wreck everything we have achieved together."

"Low inflation... low mortgages... falling unemployment, our economic success is too good to give up," Mr. Major said in his hallmark "Gray Man" monotone voice.

"Don't take the risk. In one careless moment, don't

throw our success away."

Again and again throughout the day, Mr. Major returned to the same theme, a forlorn, last-ditch plea not to be misled by the "false attraction" of Labour's "well-packaged marketing scam."

"Don't fall for it," he told a press conference. "Don't be taken in."

Ironically, an egg thrown at his limousine by a labour heckler outside a supermarket in Stevenage, north of London, gave Mr. Major the only genuine opportunity to vary his day's campaign pitch.

"Well, this is the Labour Party in the country," he said. "This is what they are really like."

"Don't be misled by the warm words of Labour who change they give you at press conferences — this is the old Labour Party out in the country, wanting to spend, wanting to nationalise, wanting to demon-

strate, wanting to support the trade unions."

But the toughest moment of Mr. Major's day was not the egg-throwing incident.

It came instead during a television call-in show when disgruntled Tory voter Margaret Curtis of Southampton told him, "We are going to lose tomorrow, John."

"We are going to lose because we have not woken up in time to the fact that the goal posts have moved, and the Labour Party are a different animal, and that ultimately has to rest at your door."

"I don't share your view," Mr. Major told her.

"This election is there to be won. There are huge numbers of people who are undecided... lots of people who are undecided and I believe we are going to win."

Mr. Blair, his 20-point lead in the polls holding steady and seemingly

unstoppable, implored undecided voters to go for "a better future with new Labour."

He constantly brushed aside questions that presumed a Labour landslide, insisting he was taking nothing for granted, fighting for every vote up to the last minute.

"The only poll that counts is the one on election day," he repeated. "We will not stop trying to persuade people to put their trust in Labour. Between now and when the polls close tomorrow night we will strive for every vote in every corner of the country."

"Our message today," said Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown, "is, don't just hope for change, vote for change."

"The time to consider protest simply is over," he told a news conference. "If you want change on Friday, you must vote for Labour on Thursday."

Turkish prosecutor seeks death sentence for forty-two Islamists in custody

ANKARA (Agencies) — A state prosecutor on Wednesday requested the death sentence for 42 Islamists charged with setting a hotel blaze that killed 37 left-wing intellectuals four years ago, the Anatolia news agency said.

The July 2, 1993 incident is the worst Islamist motivated crime in modern Turkey's history. Scores of religious extremists set fire to the hotel in the central town of Sivas where intellectuals were holding a conference. Thirty seven people were burned alive.

In 1994, a court sentenced 27 suspects out of a total 124 on trial to 15 years in jail for murder.

But a higher appeals court last December overturned the sentences and called for a new trial, qualifying the 1993 incident as a "fundamentalist rebellion" that required more severe punishment.

The prosecutor on Wednesday asked that the 42 suspects be retried on the more serious charge of "trying to forcefully change the constitutional regime" and requested capital punishment.

He also demanded 15-year sentences for 39 other suspects and asked that the rest be acquitted.

The prosecutor's move came amid a bitter row between Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's ruling pro-Islamist Welfare Party and the powerful military, which sees itself as the

guardian of modern Turkey's secular heritage.

A senior military official said on Tuesday that the fight against pro-Islamist radicalism was the highest priority of the Turkish army.

"Fighting religious fundamentalism is of vital importance for the Turkish military," Lieutenant-General Cetin Dogan, a senior official at the Turkish General Staff, told a briefing for reporters.

In the Sivas incident, hundreds of angry pro-Islamist protesters held a demonstration in the city centre after a leading leftist writer, Aziz Nesin, "questioned the originality of the Koran" at a conference in the town.

Mr. Nesin further angered Islamists when he published in a leftist newspaper extracts from "The Satanic Verses" by British author Salman Rushdie, for whom Iran has issued a death sentence for blasphemy against Islam.

Extremists later torched Madimak Hotel. Though 37 died in the blaze Mr. Nesin and several others survived.

Temel Karamollaglu, the Islamist mayor of Sivas at the time who was publicly criticised over the incident, is now a parliamentary deputy and one of Welfare's administrators.

Pro-Islamic Justice Minister Sevtik Kacan was the lawyer of several defendants in the first trial.

Turkey's military-dominated top body last Saturday

ordered the government to implement previously agreed tough measures to curb pro-Islamist extremism, including the education reform which calls for the closure of hundreds of Islamist schools.

The National Security Council, effectively a vehicle for army influence on politics, forced the government in February to approve a package of measures aimed at halting the trend.

Other measures agreed at the time included a ban on pro-Islamist propaganda on television, the sacking of religious extremists from state services, limitations on religious dressing and tighter controls on Islamist foundations.

However, Welfare reluctance to implement the measures has kept tensions high. Two pro-secular ministers from Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller's True Path Party, Mr. Erbakan's conservative coalition partner, resigned from the cabinet last Saturday, blaming the premier's pro-Islamist slant.

The army-Islamist rift has raised fears of a military coup, although top military commanders have ruled out the possibility and called for ways of a parliamentary settlement to the political problems.

Meanwhile, a Turkish court sentenced more than 100 Islamist sect members to three years in prison on Wednesday for challenging the official secularist order, Judge Orhan Karadeniz said.

Greece, Turkey attempt to solve old differences

ISTANBUL (AFP) — Visiting Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos said here Wednesday that Greece and Turkey would work together to solve their long-standing disputes.

"We shall do what is possible to overcome the difficulties of the past," Mr. Pangalos told reporters after a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller.

"In both countries there is an understanding now that we can have peaceful relations and cooperation that is of interest to both countries," Greece thinks that Turkey's place is in Europe and that there is a future for the Turkish people in the European family.

"We very much hope that through our dedication and work, solutions have well to be found and we think there is big popular support in both countries for better relations."

Ms. Ciller said: "We have exchanged views on what could be done to promote the ties between the two countries."

Ms. Ciller and Mr. Pangalos met on the sidelines of a Black Sea cooperation meeting.

They had walked out of a

hall where the Black Sea foreign ministers were meeting and began face-to-face talks in another room at an Istanbul hotel, according to an AFP reporter on the scene.

Greece announced at a meeting between Turkish and European Union (EU) officials in Luxembourg on Tuesday that it would maintain a veto on planned EU aid for arch rival Turkey.

Despite the veto, EU, Greek and Turkish diplomats say that in recent weeks an atmosphere of rapprochement has emerged between the two North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members which may pave the way for a process of settlement of their sovereignty disputes over the Aegean Sea.

Wary of Turkish-Greek rows paralysing its southern flank, NATO, and in particular the United States, have urged Ankara and Athens to step up efforts to resolve their differences.

Turkey and Greece came to the brink of war in January last year over the sovereignty of a handful of rocky islets in the Aegean Sea. Only U.S. diplomatic pressure prevented an armed confrontation.

The two countries are also involved in the long-lasting Cyprus problem.

Mr. Ciller said Tuesday in Luxembourg that Greece and Turkey had agreed to set up a joint committee of wise men to explore avenues for settling their long-standing differences.

"We managed to reach agreement on a Greek-Turkish committee of wise men and we hope this group will succeed in exploring balanced solutions" to the problems, she had said.

The accord came as EU officials and Turkey held their first formal meeting after a freeze of 18 months imposed by Greece in a quarrel with Turkey over ownership of the Aegean islets.

In a joint statement, the 15 EU states took note that Turkey "confirms that it has no territorial claims." EU members also reminded Turkey of the need to renounce force to settle territorial differences and take disputes to the international court in the Hague.

However, despite the conciliatory tone from Turkey, Greece refused to lift its veto on a 375 million ECU (\$330 million) aid package to Ankara.

Pollard appeals to Israel for pressure

TEL AVIV (AP) — Convicted spy Jonathan Pollard petitioned the supreme court on Wednesday to force Israel to negotiate him as an Israeli agent and step up efforts to win his release from an American jail.

"We hope to light a fire under the Israeli government to fulfill their commitments and their promises to Jonathan Pollard," Pollard's lawyer, Larry Dub, told the Associated Press.

Pollard, a former navy analyst, is serving a life sentence for passing U.S. military secrets to Israel. He has been in jail since 1985.

Pollard's wife Esther told Israel army Radio that Israel has not done enough to release her husband, 42, who is suffering from arthritis and developing glaucoma.

"He has been sitting there for 12 years. There has been no progress. The situation is one of helplessness. They promise and do nothing," she said.

The appeal asks the court to order Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to publicly name Pollard as an agent and specify what is being done to get him released.

The petition also accuses the government of "breach of promise" for refusing to continue funding Pollard's defence and supporting his wife, Mr. Dub said.

"We hope that the result

of filing this appeal will be that the government will take his case more seriously and will fulfill commitments to bring about the release and to discuss his release with the American officials at every opportunity," Mr. Dub said.

Mr. Netanyahu said in a statement that he has worked for many years to try to bring about Pollard's release and said he brings up the subject in every visit to Washington and every meeting with U.S. administration officials.

"The prime minister will continue to do all he can to bring Jonathan Pollard to Israel," the statement said.

Pollard is currently being held at the Federal Correctional Institution in Butner, North Carolina.

In July 1996, U.S. President Bill Clinton rejected a clemency plea by Pollard, citing the enormity of his crime, Pollard's lack of remorse, and the damage he caused U.S. security.

Before his election, Mr. Netanyahu promised Mrs. Pollard he would prod the Americans to free her husband. But Mrs. Pollard said the prime minister has disappointed her.

In trips to the United States and in meetings with Mr. Clinton, "he didn't even whisper his name," she said. "When we asked his advisors they said it is not the right time. It is never the right time to talk about Jonathan Pollard."

Iran tops USA's terrorism blacklist

WASHINGTON (AFP) — For the third consecutive year, the United States set to point an accusing finger at Iran and six other countries for supporting terrorism: Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria will be cited as state sponsors of terrorism in the State Department's 1996 report on terrorism to be released Wednesday, a U.S. official said.

The list has remained unchanged since Sudan was added to the blacklist in 1993. Under U.S. law, those states identified by the State Department as lending support or tolerating terrorists

are barred from receiving U.S. development and military aid among other penalties.

The release of the report, which has branded Iran the premier state sponsor of terrorism since the 1980s, comes on the heels of a decision by the European Union to tighten its stance towards Tehran.

The 15-nation European Union decided at a meeting in Luxembourg Tuesday to ban ministerial visits with Iran and to end the critical dialogue it had been pursuing with the Islamist regime to try to influence its behaviour.

U.N. plans Turkish, Greek Cypriot talks

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on Tuesday that if a face-to-face meeting in June between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities went well, he hoped to hold two more sessions that would indicate by September whether progress could be made.

"I do hope that the two leaders will come prepared to work with me to resolve this long-standing conflict," he said, replying to a question from a Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation reporter during a global forum organised by the Cable News Network CNN.

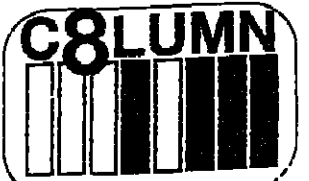
Cyprus has been virtually partitioned since 1974 when troops from Turkey took over

the north of the island after a brief coup in Nicosia engineered by the junta then ruling Greece. The United Nations has been trying for more than 20 years to reunite Cyprus under a federal system.

Mr. Annan, who was visiting Atlanta, Georgia, said he had met both President Glafcos Clerides, head of the Greek Cypriot community, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash.

"If all goes well, in June I would expect to have a face-to-face meeting. We would invite the two leaders. I would open the meeting," the secretary-general said.

Mr. Clerides and Mr. Denktash are not known to have met for nearly three years.



Price for Chinese snuff bottle nothing to sniff at

HONG KONG (R) — The smallest lot at a Sotheby's auction went for a price that was nothing to sniff at on Monday when one collector paid HK\$1.67 million (\$215,760) for an 18th century Chinese snuff bottle. The piece, a very rare imperial enamelled glass miniature double-gourd snuff bottle from the Qianlong period (1736-1795), attracted fierce bidding and topped pre-sale estimates of \$90,000 to \$115,000. Sotheby's said in a statement. "Snuff bottles made by the Beijing palace workshop continued to attract strong interest," it said. The 81 snuff bottles on offer brought in more than \$70,000, well above pre-sale estimates, Sotheby's said.

Bangladeshi uncle to die for sex killing of eight-year-old niece

DHAKA (AFP) — A Bangladeshi villager has been sentenced to death by hanging for the rape and murder of his eight-year-old niece, newspapers reported here Tuesday. The judge in northeastern Narsingdi town Monday handed down the judgement convicting Abdul Motaleb for the August 1995 incident in Bagdi village, some 35 kilometres from here. The Sangbad daily reported. Reports quoting prosecutors said Motaleb took the girl, identified only as Nilufa, to his home one evening, raped her viciously and left her bleeding and screaming on a nearby road. The girl died in hospital hours later. Neighbours and the victim's parents detained Motaleb.

Pro-China group to show film on opium war to mark Hong Kong handover

HONG KONG (AFP) — A Chinese company will screen an episode of a television series here on the Sino-British opium war which ended Beijing rule over Hong Kong in 1842. It was announced Tuesday. The 18-part series "Lin Zexu" will also be aired in Taiwan and Singapore after its premiere at a Hong Kong hotel Tuesday. Huamin Holdings said in a front-page advertisement in the China-backed Ta Kung Pao daily. Hong Kong's Asia Television will screen the entire series before the British territory returns to Chinese rule on July 1. It said. The Sino-British opium war was sparked when Lin, a Qing Dynasty special commissioner in Guangzhou, ordered seizures and burnings of the drug to stamp out the opium trade, which was at the time led by British merchants. A similar \$9.6 million film on the opium war is also expected to be released worldwide.

Kon-Tiki copycat voyage not credible, says expert

EASTER ISLAND, Chile (R) — The goal of a Spanish adventurer to sail a reed boat across the Pacific in a recreation of an ancient Polynesian voyage is based on dubious historical ideas, said a Chilean expert on Monday. Anthropologist Claudio Cristino, a Chilean anthropologist, called the project "an academic scandal" based on historical premises that had long been discredited as "complete stupidities." Spaniard adventurer Kiti Manoz built the 30-metre long vessel, meant to be a replica of primitive ships used before the arrival of Europeans on the South Pacific island, on a beach on Easter Island and plans to sail it to New Zealand via Samoa. With a multinational crew and a message of peace and brotherhood, the project won funding from the government of Chile, the Spanish Royal Family, the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and various companies.